ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

September 10, 2010

Mr. W. Montgomery Meitler
Assistant Counsel
Texas Education Agency
1701 North Congress Avenue
Austin, Texas 78701-1494

OR2010-13772

Dear Mr. Meitler:

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# 393368 (TEA PIR # 13439).

The Texas Education Agency (the "agency") received a request for complaints, audits, and investigations concerning four named charter schools. You state the agency has released a portion of the requested information to the requestor. You claim the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.116 of the Government Code. We have considered the exception you claim and reviewed the submitted representative sample of information.[1]

Section 552.116 of the Government Code provides:

> (a) An audit working paper of an audit of the state auditor or the auditor of a state agency, an institution of higher education as defined by Section 61.003, Education Code, a county, a municipality, a school district,

[1]We assume that the "representative sample" of records submitted to this office is truly representative of the requested records as a whole. *See* Open Records Decision Nos. 499 (1988), 497 (1988). This open records letter does not reach, and therefore does not authorize the withholding of, any other requested records to the extent that those records contain substantially different types of information than that submitted to this office.

> or a joint board operating under Section 22.074, Transportation Code, including any audit relating to the criminal history background check of a public school employee, is excepted from [required public disclosure under the Act]. If information in an audit working paper is also maintained in another record, that other record is not excepted from [required public disclosure] by this section.
>
> (b) In this section:
>
> > (1) 'Audit' means an audit authorized or required by a statute of this state or the United States, the charter or an ordinance of a municipality, an order of the commissioners court of a county, a resolution or other action of a board of trustees of a school district, including an audit by the district relating to the criminal history background check of a public school employee, or a resolution or other action of a joint board described by Subsection (a) and includes an investigation.
> >
> > (2) 'Audit working paper' includes all information, documentary or otherwise, prepared or maintained in conducting an audit or preparing an audit report, including:
> >
> > > (A) intra-agency and interagency communications; and
> > >
> > > (B) drafts of the audit report or portions of those drafts.

Gov't Code § 552.116. You inform us the submitted information consists of audit working papers prepared or maintained by the agency's Division of Program Monitoring and Interventions in conjunction with an audit of one of the schools specified in the request for information. You state audits such as this are authorized by section 7.028 of the Education Code and section 80.40 of title 34 of the Code of Federal Regulations. *See* Educ. Code § 7.028 (authorizing agency to monitor charter school compliance with educational programs as necessary to ensure compliance with federal law, regulations, and financial accountability); 34 C.F.R. § 80.40(a) (requiring agency to monitor grant and subgrant supported activities to assure compliance with applicable federal requirements). Based on your representations and our review, we agree the submitted information consists of audit working papers as defined in section 552.116(b)(2) of the Government Code. Accordingly, the agency may withhold this information pursuant to section 552.116 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,

Bob Davis
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

RSD/tp

Ref: ID# 393368

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)