



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

July 28, 2011

Mr. Steve Stanford
Director of Communications
Katy Independent School District
P.O. Box 159
Katy, Texas 77492-0159

OR2011-10889

Dear Mr. Stanford:

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# 425296 (Katy PIR No. 10561-70).

The Katy Independent School District (the "district") received a request for information concerning court cases in the requestor's record. You claim the requested information is excepted from disclosure under sections 552.101 and 552.108 of the Government Code. We have considered the exceptions you claim.

Section 552.301 of the Government Code prescribes the procedures that a governmental body must follow in asking this office to decide whether requested information is excepted from public disclosure. Pursuant to section 552.301(e), a governmental body that receives a request for information that it wishes to withhold under an exception to disclosure is required to submit to this office within fifteen business days of receiving the request (1) general 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. Gov't Code § 552.301(e). The district received the request for information on

May 10, 2011. You inform this office the district observed a holiday on May 30, 2011. Thus, the district was required to submit the information required by section 552.301(e) by June 1, 2011. As of the date of this letter, you have not submitted arguments explaining why the stated exceptions apply or a copy or representative sample of the specific information requested. Consequently, we find the district has failed to comply with the requirements of section 552.301(e).

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 information is public and must be released, unless a governmental body demonstrates a compelling reason to withhold the information to overcome this presumption. *See* Gov't Code § 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) (governmental body must make compelling demonstration to overcome presumption of openness pursuant to statutory predecessor to section 552.302); Open Records Decision No. 630 (1994). Normally, a compelling reason exists when third-party interests are at stake or when information is confidential under other law. Open Records Decision No. 150 (1977). Although you assert the requested information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.108 of the Government Code, that is a discretionary exception to disclosure and may be waived. *See* Gov't Code § 552.007; Open Records Decision Nos. 663 at 5 (1999) (untimely request for decision resulted in waiver of discretionary exceptions), 177 (1977) (statutory predecessor to section 552.108 subject to waiver). In failing to comply with the requirements of section 552.301, you have waived your claim under section 552.108. Accordingly, the district may not withhold the requested information under section 552.108 of the Government Code.

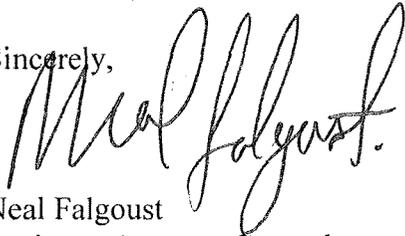
The district also raises section 552.101 of the Government Code, which is a mandatory exception to disclosure. However, because you have not submitted a copy or representative sample of the information at issue for our review, we have no basis for finding any of the requested information confidential by law. Therefore, we must order the district to release the information at issue pursuant to section 552.302. If you believe this information is confidential and may not lawfully be released, you 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 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,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Neal Falgoust". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "N".

Neal Falgoust
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

NF/tf

Ref: ID# 425296

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)