



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS  
GREG ABBOTT

August 6, 2013

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

OR2013-13598

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# 495443.

The Texas Education Agency (the "agency") received a request for information on non-special education related complaints lodged against schools or school officials for a specified time period.<sup>1</sup> You state you will release some 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.<sup>2</sup>

Initially, you state a portion of the requested information was the subject of a previous request for information, as a result of which this office issued Open Records Letter No. 2013-12674 (2013). In Open Records Letter No. 2013-12674, we determined the agency

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<sup>1</sup>We note the agency sought and received clarification of the request. *See* Gov't Code § 552.222(b) (governmental body may communicate with requestor for purpose of clarifying or narrowing request for information).

<sup>2</sup>We assume 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 those records contain substantially different types of information than that submitted to this office.

may withhold the information at issue in that ruling pursuant to section 552.116 of the Government Code. You indicate there has not been any change in the law, facts, or circumstances on which the prior ruling was based. Accordingly, for the requested information that is identical to the information previously requested and ruled upon by this office, we conclude the agency may rely on Open Records Letter No. 2013-12674 as a previous determination and withhold the identical information in accordance with that ruling. *See* Open Records Decision No. 673 (2001) (so long as law, facts, and circumstances on which prior ruling was based have not changed, first type of previous determination exists where requested information is precisely same information as was addressed in prior attorney general ruling, ruling is addressed to same governmental body, and ruling concludes that information is or is not excepted from disclosure).

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, a hospital district, 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]. If information in an audit working paper is also maintained in another record, that other record is not excepted from [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, the bylaws adopted by or other action of the governing board of a hospital district, 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(a)–(b). You state the submitted information consists of "audit working papers prepared or maintained by [the agency's] Student Assessment Division

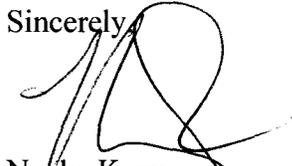
Security Task Force in conducting an investigation of testing irregularities in the administration of statewide assessment instruments.” You inform us the investigation was “authorized by section 39.057(a)(8) of the Education Code, which permits the [c]ommissioner of [e]ducation to authorize special accreditation investigations to be conducted in response to an allegation regarding or an analysis using a statistical method result indicating a possible violation of an assessment instrument security procedure[.]” See Educ. Code § 39.057 (listing circumstances in which the commissioner of education shall authorize investigations). Based on your representations and our review, we agree the submitted information constitutes audit working papers under section 552.116. Thus, the agency may withhold the submitted information under section 552.116 of the Government Code.

In summary, the agency may continue to rely on Open Records Letter No. 2013-12674 as a previous determination and withhold the identical requested information in accordance with that ruling. The agency may withhold the submitted information under 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](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,



Nneka Kanu  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

NK/bhf

Ref: ID# 495443

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor  
(w/o enclosures)