



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS  
GREG ABBOTT

October 4, 2011

Ms. Shirley R. Thomas  
Senior Assistant General Counsel  
Dallas Area Rapid Transit  
P.O. Box 660163  
Dallas, Texas 75266-0163

OR2011-14284

Dear Ms. Thomas:

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# 431762 (DART ORR # 8375).

Dallas Area Rapid Transit ("DART") received a request for interview questions regarding the junior buyer position and a particular employee's job history. You state DART has released some of the responsive information. You claim that the submitted interview questions are excepted from disclosure under section 552.122 of the Government Code. We have considered the exception you claim and reviewed the submitted information.

Section 552.122 of the Government Code excepts from disclosure "a test item developed by a . . . governmental body[.]" Gov't Code § 552.122(b). In Open Records Decision No. 626 (1994), this office determined that the term "test item" in section 552.122 includes "any standard means by which an individual's or group's knowledge or ability in a particular area is evaluated," but does not encompass evaluations of an employee's overall job performance or suitability. ORD 626 at 6. The question of whether specific information falls within the scope of section 552.122(b) must be determined on a case-by-case basis. *Id.* Traditionally, this office has applied section 552.122 where release of "test items" might compromise the effectiveness of future examinations. *Id.* at 4-5; *see also* Open Records Decision No. 118 (1976). Section 552.122 also protects the answers to test questions when the answers might reveal the questions themselves. *See* Attorney General Opinion JM-640 at 3 (1987); ORD 626 at 8.

You seek to withhold the submitted interview questions under section 552.122 of the Government Code. You assert release of this information “would impair DART’s ability to evaluate [applicants and ] would provide an unfair advantage for future applicants.” Having considered your arguments and reviewed the information at issue, we find interview questions one and two qualify as test items for the purposes of section 552.122(b). Accordingly, we conclude DART may withhold questions one and two under section 552.122 of the Government Code. We find, however, the remaining information consists of questions that evaluate an applicant’s general knowledge, personal opinions, and subjective ability to respond to particular situations, and do not test any specific knowledge of an applicant. Thus, we determine the remaining items are not test items under section 552.122(b) of the Government Code and therefore may not be withheld on this basis. Accordingly, the remaining information must be released.

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,



Cindy Nettles  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

CN/dls

Ref: ID# 431762

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor  
(w/o enclosures)