



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

October 30, 2014

Ms. Melody Chappell
Counsel for Port Arthur Independent School District
Wells, Peyton, Greenberg & Hunt, L.L.P.
P.O. Box 3708
Beaumont, Texas 77704-3708

OR2014-19668

Dear Ms. Chappell:

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# 545960.

The Port Arthur Independent School District (the "district"), which you represent, received a request for the audio recordings of specified meetings pertaining to two specified grievances. You claim the requested information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.101 of the Government Code. We have considered the exception you claim.

Section 552.101 of the Government Code excepts from disclosure "information considered to be confidential by law, either constitutional, statutory, or by judicial decision." Gov't Code § 552.101. This exception encompasses information other statutes make confidential. Section 551.104 of the Open Meetings Act, chapter 551 of the Government Code, provides in part that "[t]he certified agenda or tape of a closed meeting is available for public inspection and copying only under a court order issued under Subsection (b)(3)." *Id.* § 551.104(c). We note the district is not required to submit a certified agenda or tape recording of a closed meeting to this office for review. *See* Open Records Decision No. 495 at 4 (1988) (attorney general lacks authority to review certified agendas or tapes of executive sessions to determine whether a governmental body may withhold such information from disclosure under statutory predecessor to section 552.101). Such information cannot be released to a member of the public in response to an open records request. *See* Attorney General Opinion JM-995 at 5-6 (1988) (public disclosure of certified agenda of closed

meeting may be accomplished only under procedures provided in Open Meetings Act). Section 551.146 of the Open Meetings Act makes it a criminal offense to disclose a certified agenda or tape recording of a lawfully closed meeting to a member of the public. *See* Gov't Code § 551.146(a)-(b); *see also* ORD 495. You state the requestor seeks access to audio recordings of closed meetings in which the district's board conducted hearings of employee grievances. Based on your representations and our review, we conclude the district must withhold the requested information under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 551.104 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.texasattorneygeneral.gov/open/orl_ruling_info.shtml, 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 may be directed to the Office of the Attorney General, toll free, at (888) 672-6787.

Sincerely,



Jennifer Luttrall
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

JL/akg

Ref: ID# 545960

c: Requestor