

February 5, 2026

Merkel Independent School District
314 Manchester Street
Merkel, TX 79536
Attention: Kelly West, Interim Superintendent

Re: US\$20,000,000 Merkel Independent School District, (A political subdivision of the State of Texas located in Taylor and Jones Counties), Unlimited Tax School Building Bonds, Series 2026, dated: March 15, 2026, due: August 15, 2046

Dear Kelly West

Pursuant to your request for an S&P Global Ratings rating on the above-referenced obligations, S&P Global Ratings has assigned a rating of "AAA". S&P Global Ratings views the outlook for this rating as stable. A copy of the rationale supporting the rating is enclosed.

This letter constitutes S&P Global Ratings' permission for you to disseminate the above-assigned ratings to interested parties in accordance with applicable laws and regulations. However, permission for such dissemination (other than to professional advisors bound by appropriate confidentiality arrangements or to allow the Issuer to comply with its regulatory obligations) will become effective only after we have released the ratings on standardandpoors.com. Any dissemination on any Website by you or your agents shall include the full analysis for the rating, including any updates, where applicable. Any such dissemination shall not be done in a manner that would serve as a substitute for any products and services containing S&P Global Ratings' intellectual property for which a fee is charged.

To maintain the rating, S&P Global Ratings must receive all relevant financial and other information, including notice of material changes to financial and other information provided to us and in relevant documents, as soon as such information is available. Relevant financial and other information includes, but is not limited to, information about direct bank loans and debt and debt-like instruments issued to, or entered into with, financial institutions, insurance companies and/or other entities, whether or not disclosure of such information would be required under S.E.C. Rule 15c2-12. You understand that S&P Global Ratings relies on you and your agents and advisors for the accuracy, timeliness and completeness of the information submitted in connection with the rating and the continued flow of material information as part of the surveillance process. Please send all information via electronic delivery to: pubfin_statelocalgovt@spglobal.com. If SEC rule 17g-5 is applicable, you may post such information on the appropriate website. For any information not available in electronic format or posted on the applicable website,

Please send hard copies to:

S&P Global Ratings
Public Finance Department
55 Water Street
New York, NY 10041-0003

The rating is subject to the Terms and Conditions, if any, attached to the Engagement Letter applicable to the rating. In the absence of such Engagement Letter and Terms and Conditions, the rating is subject to the attached Terms and Conditions. The applicable Terms and Conditions are incorporated herein by reference.

S&P Global Ratings is pleased to have the opportunity to provide its rating opinion. For more information please visit our website at www.standardandpoors.com. If you have any questions, please contact us. Thank you for choosing S&P Global Ratings.

Sincerely yours,

S&P Global Ratings
a division of Standard & Poor's Financial Services LLC

al
enclosures

cc: **John Blackburn, Managing Director**
Live Oak Public Finance LLC

S&P Global Ratings
Terms and Conditions Applicable To Public Finance Credit Ratings

General. The credit ratings and other views of S&P Global Ratings are statements of opinion and not statements of fact. Credit ratings and other views of S&P Global Ratings are not recommendations to purchase, hold, or sell any securities and do not comment on market price, marketability, investor preference or suitability of any security. While S&P Global Ratings bases its credit ratings and other views on information provided by issuers and their agents and advisors, and other information from sources it believes to be reliable, S&P Global Ratings does not perform an audit, and undertakes no duty of due diligence or independent verification, of any information it receives. Such information and S&P Global Ratings' opinions should not be relied upon in making any investment decision. S&P Global Ratings does not act as a "fiduciary" or an investment advisor. S&P Global Ratings neither recommends nor will recommend how an issuer can or should achieve a particular credit rating outcome nor provides or will provide consulting, advisory, financial or structuring advice. Unless otherwise indicated, the term "issuer" means both the issuer and the obligor if the obligor is not the issuer.

All Credit Rating Actions in S&P Global Ratings' Sole Discretion. S&P Global Ratings may assign, raise, lower, suspend, place on CreditWatch, or withdraw a credit rating, and assign or revise an Outlook, at any time, in S&P Global Ratings' sole discretion. S&P Global Ratings may take any of the foregoing actions notwithstanding any request for a confidential or private credit rating or a withdrawal of a credit rating, or termination of a credit rating engagement. S&P Global Ratings will not convert a public credit rating to a confidential or private credit rating, or a private credit rating to a confidential credit rating.

Publication. S&P Global Ratings reserves the right to use, publish, disseminate, or license others to use, publish or disseminate a credit rating and any related analytical reports, including the rationale for the credit rating, unless the issuer specifically requests in connection with the initial credit rating that the credit rating be assigned and maintained on a confidential or private basis. If, however, a confidential or private credit rating or the existence of a confidential or private credit rating subsequently becomes public through disclosure other than by an act of S&P Global Ratings or its affiliates, S&P Global Ratings reserves the right to treat the credit rating as a public credit rating, including, without limitation, publishing the credit rating and any related analytical reports. Any analytical reports published by S&P Global Ratings are not issued by or on behalf of the issuer or at the issuer's request. S&P Global Ratings reserves the right to use, publish, disseminate or license others to use, publish or disseminate analytical reports with respect to public credit ratings that have been withdrawn, regardless of the reason for such withdrawal. S&P Global Ratings may publish explanations of S&P Global Ratings' credit ratings criteria from time to time and S&P Global Ratings may modify or refine its credit ratings criteria at any time as S&P Global Ratings deems appropriate.

Reliance on Information. S&P Global Ratings relies on issuers and their agents and advisors for the accuracy and completeness of the information submitted in connection with credit ratings and the surveillance of credit ratings including, without limitation, information on material changes to information previously provided by issuers, their agents or advisors. Credit ratings, and the maintenance of credit ratings, may be affected by S&P Global Ratings' opinion of the information received from issuers, their agents or advisors.

Confidential Information. S&P Global Ratings has established policies and procedures to maintain the confidentiality of certain non-public information received from issuers, their agents or advisors. For these purposes, "Confidential Information" shall mean verbal or written information that the issuer or its agents or advisors have provided to S&P Global Ratings and, in a specific and particularized manner, have marked or otherwise indicated in writing (either prior to or promptly following such disclosure) that such information is "Confidential."

S&P Global Ratings Not an Expert, Underwriter or Seller under Securities Laws. S&P Global Ratings has not consented to and will not consent to being named an "expert" or any similar designation under any applicable securities laws or other regulatory guidance, rules or recommendations, including without limitation, Section 7 of the U.S. Securities Act of 1933. S&P Global Ratings has not performed and will not perform the role or tasks associated with an "underwriter" or "seller" under the United States federal securities laws or other regulatory guidance, rules or recommendations in connection with a credit rating engagement.

Disclaimer of Liability. S&P Global Ratings does not and cannot guarantee the accuracy, completeness, or timeliness of the information relied on in connection with a credit rating or the results obtained from the use of such information. S&P GLOBAL RATINGS GIVES NO EXPRESS OR IMPLIED WARRANTIES, INCLUDING, BUT NOT LIMITED TO, ANY WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY OR FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE OR USE. S&P Global Ratings, its affiliates or third party providers, or any of their officers, directors, shareholders, employees or agents shall not be liable to any person for any inaccuracies, errors, or omissions, in each case regardless of cause, actions, damages (consequential, special, indirect, incidental, punitive, compensatory, exemplary or otherwise), claims, liabilities, costs, expenses, legal fees or losses (including, without limitation, lost income or lost profits and opportunity costs) in any way arising out of or relating to a credit rating or the related analytic services even if advised of the possibility of such damages or other amounts.

No Third Party Beneficiaries. Nothing in any credit rating engagement, or a credit rating when issued, is intended or should be construed as creating any rights on behalf of any third parties, including, without limitation, any recipient of a credit rating. No person is intended as a third party beneficiary of any credit rating engagement or of a credit rating when issued.