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Attorney General v. Mystic Valley Regional Charter School

Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts, Suffolk - March 11, 2026 - N.E.3d - 2026 WL 679477

State attorney general brought an enforcement action against a charter school which had refused to comply with multiple public records requests, seeking declarations that school was a custodian of public records and that it was not exempt from disclosure obligations imposed by the Massachusetts Public Records Law.

The Superior Court Department granted judgment on the pleadings in attorney general's favor, concluding that school was a governmental entity obligated to respond to the requests. School appealed. The Supreme Judicial Court, on its own initiative, transferred the case from the Appeals Court.

The Supreme Judicial Court held that:

- Commonwealth charter schools were "authorities established by the general court to serve a public purpose" and subject to the Public Records Law;
- Commonwealth charter schools' operational independence and corporate features did not make them more akin to private entities than to governmental bodies subject to the Public Records Law;
- Absence of statutory language expressly designating charter schools as governmental entities was not dispositive of whether they were governmental entities subject to the Public Records Law; and
- Charter school's concerns that compliance with the Public Records Law would impose significant financial burdens and interfere with its educational mission did not make it exempt from the Law.