

**Recent Documented Examples of When
STOUGHTON SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION
Was on the wrong side of the Law**

“Massachusetts Supervisor of Records wrote on 7/26/2012”

- ★ "Public records" is broadly defined to include all documentary materials or data, regardless of physical form or characteristics, made or received by any officer or employee of any town of the Commonwealth, unless falling within a statutory exemption.
- ★ Given that the ability to inspect the records of government is fundamental to our democracy, there is a presumption that all governmental records are public records. Disclosure of governmental records is favored by the presumption that the record sought is public.
- ★ Accordingly, I find that all the requested records detailing credentials, certifications and licenses are public records. The Schools are permitted to withhold any responsive evaluation materials as personnel records pursuant to the first clause of Exemption (c) of the Public Records Law.
- ★ The Schools are hereby ordered to provide Dr. Ural with the responsive records containing credential, certification and license information within ten (10) days of the date of this determination.

“Massachusetts Attorney General’s Office wrote on 10/31/2011”

- ★ On June 30, 2010, Dr. Rizzi completed her first year as Superintendent of the Stoughton Public Schools.
- ★ The term of Dr. Rizzi's employment, according to her original contract, was three years — from July 1, 2009 until June 30, 2012. ...
- ★ Committee Member Sovinee "listed areas [where] she has seen positive growth" and Chairman Colburn noted that "He would like to see continued improvement on providing information to the community." ...
- ★ The executive session was convened at 8:41 p.m. and adjourned at 10:15 p.m. Although it lasted for more than an hour and a half, the minutes from the September 28, 2011 executive session are extremely sparse and take up only one third of one page.
- ★ The minutes from the September 14, 2010 executive session, which also lasted for an hour and a half, are equally brief, comprising only one third of one page.
- ★ The Committee violated the Open Meeting Law by failing to provide sufficient detail about the purpose for its executive session, both in its meeting notice and when it convened in executive session during the September 28, 2010 meeting.
- ★ The Committee further violated the Open Meeting Law by failing to ratify in open session a contract extension agreed to between the Committee and the Superintendent during executive session.
- ★ We accordingly order immediate and future compliance with the Open Meeting Law and caution the Committee that a determination by our office of

similar violations in the future may be considered evidence of intent to violate the Open Meeting Law.

- ★ We also order the Committee to attend a training on the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §§ 18-25, within 90 days of receipt of this letter, to be conducted by an attorney or organization familiar with the requirements of the Open Meeting Law and approved by this office.
- ★ Finally, we order the Committee to amend its September 28, 2010 meeting minutes to include "a list of documents and other exhibits used" at the Committee's September 28, 2010 meeting.

“Massachusetts Attorney General’s Office wrote on 12/27/2011”

- ★ The Open Meeting Law requires a public body to "create and maintain accurate minutes of all meetings, including executive sessions ..."
- ★ After reviewing the Committee's executive session minutes, however, we find that the Committee did not include the minimum detail required by the law. The Committee entered executive session at 9:15 p.m. and adjourned at 10:40 p.m. The minutes contain a heading for "Contract Negotiations" followed by two brief sentences, and a heading for "Grievance" followed by three brief sentences.
- ★ For a discussion of at least two topics that lasted one hour and twenty-five minutes, the level of detail provided by the Committee is not sufficient...
- ★ For the reasons stated above, we order the Committee to draft and approve minutes for the March 1, 2011 executive session that contain a summary of each discussion, with sufficient detail and accuracy so that a member of the public who did not attend the meeting could read the minutes and have a clear understanding of what occurred.
- ★ We encourage the Committee to include both minority and majority opinions in the summary of the discussion reflected in the final minutes.

“Norfolk County District Attorney’s Office wrote on 9/19/2008”

- ★ School Committee did violate the Open Meeting Law by deliberating outside of a properly convened meeting regarding the contents of their July 11, 2008 response.
- ★ This matter can be resolved by the School Committee acknowledging on the record at an open session of a properly-convened meeting that it violated the Open Meeting Law and agreeing to comply with the Open Meeting Law in the future.
- ★ The minutes of this meeting and a letter expressing the School Committee's acknowledgement should be sent to this office within thirty days.

“Norfolk County District Attorney’s Office wrote on 10/25/2009”

- ★ We find that the Open Meeting Law was violated when a subcommittee of the Stoughton School Committee met on February 10, 2009 to discuss the appropriate ratio of budget cuts

- ★ We find that the School Committee has not shown that the March 31, 2009, meeting was properly posted
- ★ Accordingly, to resolve this matter we only require a written statement from the School Committee that they will comply with the Open Meeting Law
- ★ Such statement should be sent to my attention within sixty days.