

UNITED STATES JUDICIAL PANEL ON MULTIDISTRICT LITIGATION

In re: PowerSchool Holdings, Inc., and PowerSchool Group, LLC
Customer Data Security Breach Litigation

In re PowerSchool · No. MDL No. 3149 · Decided April 18, 2025

SUMMARY

The Judicial Panel on Multidistrict Litigation ordered centralization of 32 actions involving the PowerSchool customer data security breach, along with related actions, in the Southern District of California. The Panel assigned the coordinated or consolidated pretrial proceedings to Judge Roger T. Benitez, finding common factual questions and that centralization would promote efficiency and avoid inconsistent rulings.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States Judicial Panel on Multidistrict Litigation
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Karen K. Caldwell; Nathaniel M. Gorton; Matthew F. Kennelly; David C. Norton; Dale A. Kimball; Madeline Cox Arleo
JURISDICTION	Judicial Panel on Multidistrict Litigation
DECIDED	April 18, 2025
DOCKET	MDL No. 3149
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Plaintiffs in an action pending in the Western District of Missouri moved under 28 U.S.C. § 1407 to centralize 32 related actions involving the PowerSchool data-security breach for coordinated or consolidated pretrial proceedings.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Unknown

TOPICS

- civil procedure
- class actions
- joinder

PRACTICE AREAS

- multidistrict litigation
- civil procedure
- data security
- class actions
- consumer protection

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the related actions involve common questions of fact warranting centralization under 28 U.S.C. § 1407.
2. Whether centralization in the Southern District of California would serve the convenience of the parties and witnesses and promote the just and efficient conduct of the litigation.
3. Whether informal coordination or transfer under 28 U.S.C. § 1404 would be preferable to multidistrict centralization.

HOLDINGS

1. The actions involve common questions of fact, and centralization under § 1407 is warranted to serve the convenience of the parties and witnesses and promote the just and efficient conduct of the litigation.
2. The Southern District of California is an appropriate transferee district for coordinated or consolidated pretrial proceedings.
3. Informal coordination was not the most efficient means of resolving the litigation because the parties had not provided assurances that potential § 1404 transfers would be uncontested.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“These actions share factual questions arising from a recent cybersecurity incident involving unauthorized access to PowerSchool’s Student Information System software, which schools use to store current and former students’ and staff members’ personal information.”

“Centralization will avoid the possibility of inconsistent pretrial rulings, particularly with respect to class certification.”

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

The actions arise from unauthorized access to PowerSchool's Student Information System, which schools use to store personal information of current and former students and staff. Plaintiffs include students, students' guardians, and school staff seeking nationwide and statewide class certification. The actions assert substantially identical negligence, breach-of-contract, and unjust-enrichment claims and will involve common discovery concerning how the breach occurred, the adequacy of PowerSchool's security practices, and notification of affected individuals.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

The Panel considered 32 actions pending in three federal districts and was informed of 23 additional related actions pending in eight districts. After reviewing the papers and holding a hearing session, the Panel granted centralization and selected the Southern District of California as the transferee district, assigning the litigation to Judge Roger T. Benitez with that court's consent.

DISPOSITION

other

REMAND INSTRUCTIONS

The actions listed on Schedule A are transferred to the Southern District of California and, with that court's consent, assigned to the Honorable Roger T. Benitez for coordinated or consolidated pretrial proceedings.

CASES CITED

- In re StockX Customer Data Sec. Breach Litig., 412 F. Supp. 3d 1363 (J.P.M.L. 2019)
- In re [24]7.AI, Inc., Customer Data Sec. Breach Litig., 338 F. Supp. 3d 1345 (J.P.M.L. 2018)
- In re Hudson's Bay Co. Customer Data Sec. Breach Litig., 326 F. Supp. 3d 1372 (J.P.M.L. 2018)
- In re Best Buy Co., Cal. Song-Beverly Credit Card Act Litig., 804 F. Supp. 2d 1376 (J.P.M.L. 2011)

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