

VIRGINIA: IN THE CIRCUIT COURT FOR THE COUNTY OF ALBEMARLE

C [REDACTED] and T [REDACTED] I [REDACTED];

R.I. and V.I., minors, by and through their parents, C [REDACTED] and T [REDACTED] I [REDACTED], as the minors' next friend;

M [REDACTED] and M [REDACTED]  
M [REDACTED];

P.M., a minor, by and through the minor's parents, M [REDACTED] and M [REDACTED], M [REDACTED] as the minor's next friend;

K [REDACTED] and M [REDACTED] G [REDACTED];

T.G. and N.G., minors, by and through their parents, K [REDACTED] and M [REDACTED], G [REDACTED], as the minors' next friend;

E [REDACTED] and T [REDACTED] D. T [REDACTED];

D.T. and H.T., minors, by and through their parents, E [REDACTED] and D [REDACTED] T [REDACTED], as the minors' next friend;

M [REDACTED] R [REDACTED]; and

L.R., a minor, by and through the minor's parent, M [REDACTED] R [REDACTED], as the minor's next friend;

*Plaintiffs,*

v.

**ALBEMARLE COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD;**

**MATTHEW S. HAAS**, Superintendent, in his official capacity; and

Case No. CL21001737-00

**DECLARATION OF PLAINTIFF  
MARIE MIERZEJEWSKI IN  
SUPPORT OF PLAINTIFFS'  
MOTION FOR PRELIMINARY  
INJUNCTION**

**BERNARD HAIRSTON**, Assistant  
Superintendent for School Community  
Empowerment, in his official capacity;

*Defendants.*

I, Marie Mierzejewski, declare as follows:

1. I am a citizen of the United States and a resident of Crozet, Virginia. I am over the age of eighteen and competent to testify. I make this declaration based on my personal knowledge.
2. My husband, Matthew, is also a U.S. citizen and resident of Crozet, Virginia. We are the parents and natural guardians of P.M., a minor, U.S. citizen, and resident of Crozet, Virginia.
3. At all times relevant to this matter, P.M. was a student in Albemarle County Public Schools. During the 2020–21 school year, P.M. was in 8th grade at Henley Middle School. P.M. is now in 9th grade at Western Albemarle High School.
4. I grew up the oldest of seven children in Meriden, Connecticut. I attended a Catholic school from kindergarten through eighth grade and then attended public school for high school. I earned my bachelor's degree in social work and worked as a social worker in inner city D.C. before moving to Charlottesville to be closer to my now husband, Matthew.
5. My husband, who goes by "Matt," grew up in Albemarle County and attended Albemarle Public Schools. After college, we decided to make our home in Crozet because we love our community. We felt blessed to have settled in Crozet.
6. I oppose racism in all its forms because it violates my religious and philosophical beliefs. I firmly believe that treating people differently based on

race is morally wrong. That is why I oppose the Albemarle County School District's Anti-racism Policy (Policy) and related curriculum. It purports to fight racism using racist ideas. It discriminates against students based on race. And it requires students to affirm and agree with its ideology. Based on my conversations with Matt, I understand that he agrees with these beliefs.

7. Matt and I are practicing Catholics, and we are raising our children in the Catholic faith.
8. As a Catholic, I believe in the teachings of the Catholic Church as laid out in the Bible and the Catechism of the Catholic Church.
9. My Catholic faith governs the way I think about all of human life, including human nature, morality, and identity, and it causes me to have sincerely-held religious beliefs in these areas.
10. For example, treating people differently based on race violates my religious belief that all people are created equal before God. I believe that every person is created in the image and likeness of God, that all people possess inherent dignity and must be treated accordingly, and that race does not determine a person's dignity as a child of God. I believe that race should never determine how a person should be treated.
11. Consistent with my faith, I endeavor to treat every person—no matter the person's race, color, or creed—with dignity, love, and care. This has always been important to me as I grew up in an ethnically diverse area, where many of my closest friends (and even past boyfriends) did not share my racial background.
12. My faith also informs me that parents are the primary educators of their children in all matters and have the duty to educate their children. My religious and philosophical beliefs hold that parents have the fundamental right to govern their children's education.

13. Matt and I have raised our children in the Catholic faith and continue to teach them the truths of the faith, especially on issues of identity, morality, dignity, and virtue. That includes teaching our children that everyone has value and should be treated with dignity and respect, that race does not determine how a person should be treated, and that racism is always wrong.
14. Matt and I strongly object to the School District indoctrinating our children in views contrary to our beliefs. We have already seen the School District doing this through Defendants' "Anti-racism" Policy that tells children to focus on race, judge people based on race, and treat people differently depending on their racial, ethnic, and religious backgrounds. We have also seen it in the School District's response to our son's Catholic faith concerning identity.
15. During the 2020–21 school year, P.M. was in eighth grade at Henley Middle School where, in Spring 2021, Defendants conducted a pilot program with curriculum created under the Policy. The curriculum focused on race and identity through an "anti-racism" lens. It used ideology and terminology taken from critical race theory. We later learned that the program was indeed based on the book, "This Book is Anti-Racist" by critical race theorist Tiffany Jewell.
16. For example, the curriculum redefined racism as exclusively one-sided—the oppression of people of color by white people. It instructed students that white, Christian, cisgender students make up the "dominant" and "oppressor" culture while students of other races, religions, and sexual orientations were "subordinate" and "oppressed." And it provided "anti-racism" as the so-called solution, requiring kids to become "anti-racist" by working against the "dominant culture" to dismantle "racist" systems, including Christianity, and denigrating many of P.M.'s own Christian beliefs.
17. These ideas were not presented as topics for discussion or debate. They were taught as incontrovertible truth and an objective description of the world. And

students were told that if they didn't become "anti-racist" activists (as defined by the curriculum) they would be upholding and perpetuating racism.

18. Compelling our children to participate in this racist curriculum and indoctrinating them with ideas contrary to their Catholic faith violates our sincerely-held religious beliefs and the beliefs of our children.
19. P.M. was part of this pilot program and received some of the eighth-grade instruction. But when we saw the content of the instruction, we removed him from the rest of the pilot program.
20. After that, we were told at an online forum with the middle school principal and several teachers that going forward, instruction like that taught in the pilot program would pervade "all content areas" and be "woven through" all classes, making it impossible for parents to opt their children out of future racist lessons.
21. Because of the Policy and related "anti-racism" instruction, we decided to not to send any of our three younger children to Albemarle County Public Schools for the 2021–22 school year. We hope to keep P.M. at Western Albemarle High School, as long as he will not be discriminated against for being white and Catholic.
22. Matt and I have already seen discrimination from the Policy negatively influence the school environment. As an example, during a class discussion about a novel in May 2021, my son stated that his Catholic faith teaches him that biological sex is immutable and that the two sexes are complementary. His comments came up during a discussion about the book's portrayal of the differing roles of men and women and in the context of another student sharing her views that the author was sexist and that the sexes could not be complementary because of transgender people. P.M.'s teacher recognized the differing views of both students, affirmed them for sharing those views, and

praised P.M. for how he respectfully conveyed his deeply-held religious beliefs. But another student, not present for the discussion, later emailed my son saying the Bible says “love thy neighbor” and that he must “stop[] with all that transphobic, sexist, misogynistic crap you’ve been spouting around.” App. 728

23. P.M. was upset by this student’s email. So, we brought the incident to his principal’s attention. We were concerned that this student had bullied P.M. because of his religious beliefs and after the Policy-based curriculum instructed students that Christianity was part of the “dominant” culture that should be dismantled.
24. Principal Costa did not address the email at all but said that the school would need to investigate P.M. for what he did to trigger such a response. Even after investigating, speaking with the teacher, and agreeing that P.M. had answered another student’s questions in a very respectful way, Principal Costa’s focus stayed on P.M. She told Matt and I that we needed to “coach” our son on how to share his beliefs as if him stating his differing view was the problem.
25. To the best of my knowledge, the school never disciplined the other student for her hateful email to P.M. even though the incident happened over school email, was independently verifiable, and the school has a strict no-bullying policy.

I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing facts are true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

Dated this 22 day of February, 2022, in Crozet, Virginia.

By:   
Marie Mierzejewski