

Families of 2 students in Virginia school where 6-year-old student shot his teacher notify district of potential legal action, attorneys say

By Sara Smart, Brian Todd and Aya Elamroussi, CNN

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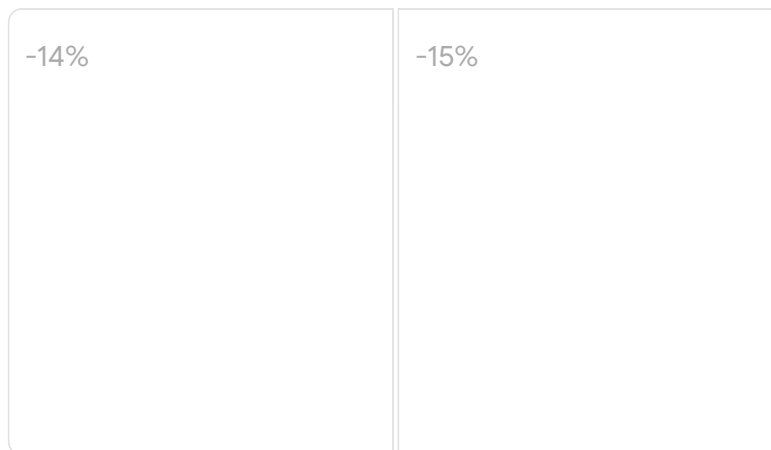
(CNN) — The families of two students who attend a Virginia school where a [6-year-old student](#) shot and wounded his first-grade teacher last month have filed notices of potential legal action against the school district.

The parents of a first-grader at Richneck Elementary School in Newport News, Virginia, say their daughter suffered from emotional harm after being present in class when her classmate shot his teacher on January 6, according to a legal notice filed by attorney Cheri Belkowitz.



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The letter, dated January 30 and sent to former Superintendent Dr. George Parker, also claims that the daughter was "subjected to numerous incidents of bullying, harassment, assault and battery" during the school year. However, administrators "did not take reasonable and appropriate actions to protect" the student, despite being made aware of these issues.



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The family of another student alleges their child suffered injuries on the day of the shooting, according to a letter sent by the parents' attorney, Emily Mapp Brannon, to the city of Newport News. The January 30 letter does not include details on the injuries mentioned. At the time of the shooting, police said no one else was physically injured aside from the teacher.

The school district would not comment in response to the letters. CNN reached out to both attorneys for the families but did not immediately hear back.

The families' intent to potentially pursue legal action against the district is the latest blow to officials following [intense criticism](#) from frustrated parents over the way the situation was handled by administrators.



Related Article: After a 6-year-old shot a teacher in class, criticism mounts for Virginia school district as officials leave posts

After the shooting, the [superintendent was ousted](#) by a vote from the school board, the school's assistant principal resigned, the former principal was [reassigned to another location](#), but the district did not say where. The school also [implemented additional security](#) measures including metal detectors and clear backpacks.

Further, the letters were filed roughly a week after the teacher's attorney notified the Newport News School Board of intent to file a lawsuit over administrators' alleged failure to act when they were allegedly made aware of reports about a gun being on school premises.

Teacher Abigail Zwerner was shot around 2 p.m. on January 6 inside a classroom, roughly 90 minutes after former assistant principal Dr. Ebony Parker was allegedly informed reports of the gun, according the legal notice filed by attorney Diane Toscano, the teacher's attorney

Toscano's legal notice also detailed [allegations of disturbing behavior](#) displayed by the 6-year-old child prior to the shooting.

Two days before the shooting, the student allegedly "slammed" and broke Zwerner's cell phone and cursed at guidance counselors, after which he was suspended, according to the document. After the one-day suspension, he returned to Zwerner's classroom and shot her.

On the day of the shooting, another teacher overheard Zwerner say the 6-year-old student was in a "violent mood," had threatened to beat up a kindergartner at the school and "angrily stared down the security officer," according to the legal notice.

After the shooting, the 6-year-old was placed under a temporary detention order and was evaluated at a local hospital. His family has previously said he has a disability he was receiving treatment for at the school.

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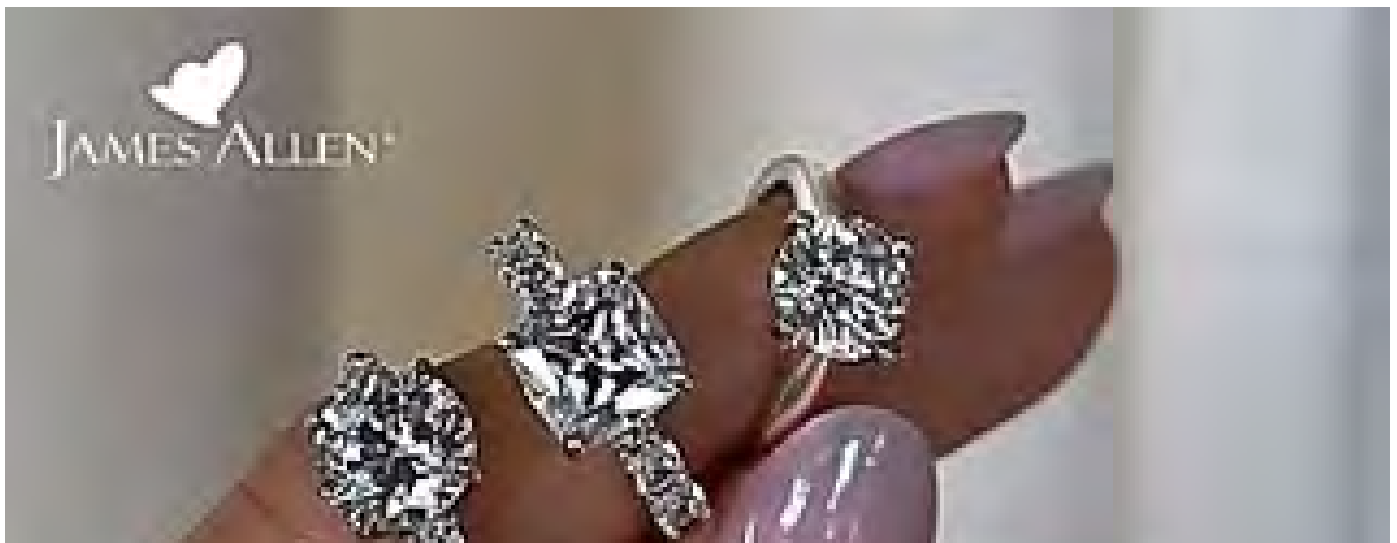
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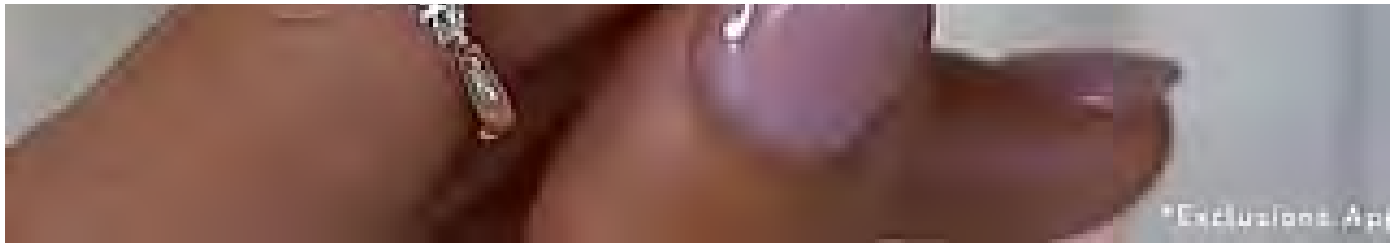
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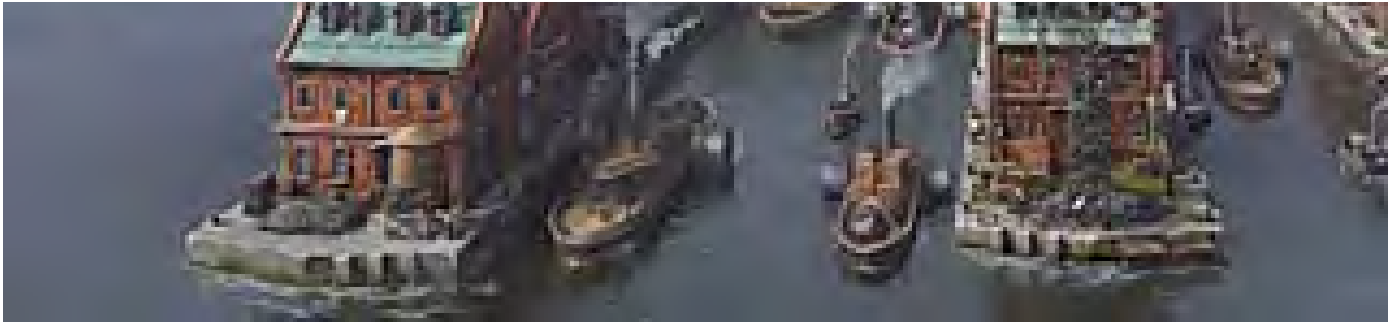
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