

Milodragovich, Dale & Steinbrenner, P.C. has been retained to represent Kathy Schneider, Principal/Superintendent, and Jacob Alford, Athletic Director, of Loyola Sacred Heart High School (LSH) in connection with legal claims related to these individuals being placed on paid administrative leave through the remainder of the 2021-2022 school year. As reported by the *Missoulian* on December 17, 2021, the President of Missoula Catholic Schools (MCS) provided no explanation for this decision it opted to make public. MCS's decision to publish internal disciplinary issues in such a manner to the MCS community, particularly while grievance procedures have been invoked but not yet exhausted, was a violation of Mrs. Schneider and Mr. Alford's right to privacy and has caused great harm to their reputations.

It had been Mrs. Schneider and Mr. Alford's hope that, after bringing the character assassination and reputational injury to the immediate attention of the President and MCS Board, necessary steps would be taken to correct the falsehoods. To date no such steps have been taken, necessitating this press release to correct the record.

The President, Luis Hayes, was hired in June for the 2021-2022 school year. At the beginning of the school year, an issue arose regarding the eligibility of a student-athlete. Following discussions with the President, Mrs. Schneider and Mr. Alford made it clear to the President they would not make any false statements or support any false statements to the Montana High School Association (MHSA) in connection with this eligibility issue. On the following day, September 8, 2021, the MCS President initiated a pattern of retaliation threatening Mrs. Schneider and Mr. Alford's employment with the school.

In October, another potential violation of MHSA rules arose, and it became apparent to Mrs. Schneider and Mr. Alford that the MCS President held a cavalier attitude towards complying with the rules. As licensed Montana Educators, Mrs. Schneider and Mr. Alford's foremost concern is ensuring the well-being of the LSH students, programs, and protecting the institution. In hopes of quietly resolving these issues without harming the reputation of LSH, Mrs. Schneider and Mr. Alford attempted to bring these issues to the attention of the MCS Board but received no response. Mrs. Schneider and Mr. Alford then attempted in November to bring this matter to the attention of the Diocese of Helena (DOH), but no effort was made to investigate the matter and, on November 15, 2021, the DOH simply approved the President's conduct.

During this process, a more serious issue came to Mrs. Schneider and Mr. Alford's attention. As licensed Montana educators, they have a duty to ensure LSH is compliant with all state and federal laws. Mr. Alford also serves as the designated Title IX Coordinator for LSH, charged with overseeing compliance efforts and investigating any complaints of sex discrimination. A potential Title IX violation was brought to Mrs. Schneider and Mr. Alford's attention in late November and, despite knowing they were risking their employment and own financial wellbeing due to the President's pattern of retaliation, they attempted to investigate the matter. Despite Mrs. Schneider and Mr. Alford's efforts to investigate this matter and seek guidance from the MHSA, they were instructed by the President to conceal the issue and the President continued his pattern of retaliation, threatening Mrs. Schneider and Mr. Alford's employment with the school.

Once again, Mrs. Schneider and Mr. Alford sought to resolve this matter privately and, on December 8, 2021, attempted to bring it to the attention of the MCS Board but received no response. Instead of investigating and addressing Mrs. Schneider and Mr. Alford's concerns that state and federal laws were being ignored and potentially violated, the President and MCS Board further retaliated against Mrs. Schneider and Mr. Alford by placing them on paid administrative leave on December 16, 2021.

After making every effort to resolve these issues internally to avoid any harm to LSH students, programs, and the institution, Mrs. Schneider and Mr. Alford are left with no alternative but to remedy this injustice through the regulatory and legal process. Mrs. Schneider and Mr. Alford are in the process of filing a complaint with the Montana Human Rights Bureau and Equal Employment Opportunity Commission in an effort to stop the President's and MCS Board's retaliation against them for opposing discriminatory practices, to remedy the President's and MCS Board's unlawful conduct, and to restore their reputation in the community.