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ESCAMBIA SCHOOLS

Fired transgender teacher files lawsuit

Mary Lett
Pensacola News Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK – FLORIDA

A former Escambia County Public Schools substitute teacher has filed a lawsuit against the school district claiming they were discriminated against because of their gender identity. Hane Cypress McLeaish, a transgender nonbinary individual, filed the lawsuit March 23 in U.S. District Court. The suit names current Superintendent Keith Leonard, former superintendent Tim Smith, principal Elizabeth Green-

berg, school board members Kevin Adams and Paul H. Fetsko and former school board members Laura Edler, Patty Hightower and Bill Slayton in their official capacities – as parties in the litigation. Greenberg, now principal of Montclair Elementary, was principal of Pine Meadow Elementary where McLeaish was employed prior to their termination. In the lawsuit, McLeaish seeks damages and prospective injunctive relief for the discriminatory and/or retaliatory suspension and termination of employ-

ment as an Escambia County school-teacher – in violation of the sex discrimination and anti-retaliation provisions of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The school district declined to comment on the pending litigation, said Cody Strother, the district’s communications coordinator. McLeaish is represented by Miami attorney Anthony Falzon, who did not return a call or respond to an email for comments. According to the lawsuit, McLeaish’s name was legally changed from Hannah Erin McLeaish on or about May 17, 2021.

Their name was also changed on their Social Security card and driver’s license. In the lawsuit, McLeaish, who obtained a substitute teacher’s certificate in August 2020, claims they encountered several instances of discrimination while working as a substitute teacher and art teacher in the school district. The lawsuit claims the instances of discrimination occurred at C.A. Weis Elementary, Global Learning Academy and Pine Meadow Elementary schools:

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Woman finding her past 50 years after Saigon’s fall



Kim Delevett, with a 1975 photograph taken in Vietnam of her as a toddler, center front, her mother, right, brother, center, and a cousin, before they fled the war-torn country, on April 3 in San Jose, Calif. Delevett was adopted by an American family in Pensacola. DAI SUGANO/BAY AREA NEWS GROUP

‘I’m on a mission to thank as many veterans and volunteers [as possible] who helped us in 1975’

Jennifer Brookland
The War Horse

Editor’s note: *This article first appeared on The War Horse, an award-winning nonprofit news organization educating the public on military service.*

Fifty years ago, 2-year-old Phan Kim Phuong was handed up into a military aircraft, her future a near-complete blank save one truth: She would not grow up in Vietnam. Saigon was falling to the North Vietnamese, people were scrambling to get out, and unbeknownst to the little girl, her family, her future, and her country were all about to be irrevocably altered. “Her country” was about to become the

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Kim Delevett used Facebook to find Ray Beery, the Air Force colonel who oversaw the tent city where she arrived as a 2-year-old at Eglin Air Force Base. PROVIDED BY KIM DELEVETT

Escambia Children’s Trust asks county for \$500,000 tax exemption

Mollye Barrows
Pensacola News Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK – FLORIDA

Instead of paying nearly \$500,000 in taxes that Escambia County says the Escambia Children’s Trust owes for 2024, ECT is asking for an exemption and requesting that the county enter into an interlocal agreement and allow the Children’s Trust to directly fund the county’s summer youth employment program or another child services initiative. The issue is on the agenda for the board’s next meeting on May 1. Board of County Commissioners Chair Mike Kohler says he would rather Escambia County have the money and decide how best to use it to benefit children within the Community Redevelopment Agency communities than involve ECT in spending decisions of the tax dollars. “I’m not interested in an interlocal agreement because here’s the problem, they want to basically do all programs,” Kohler said, “and if we do that, they cannot actually give any money for infrastructure.” Although Escambia County has money for infrastructure in CRAs, which aim to revitalize areas experiencing blight or decline, Kohler said it’s not enough and he won’t support the Children’s Trust request. Kohler said the county can address other needs children have that the Children’s Trust can’t, like providing property or buildings for a program and improving infrastructure in blighted neighborhoods. “From this point forward, hopefully they’ll just pay the 5% to the CRAs, to the poorest communities in the county to help with infrastructure,” Kohler said. “We want to work with the ECT, but the board voted 5-0 last year for the money and they paid it.” In 2024, the board voted to pursue money from ECT arguing that as a taxing authority ECT should pay appropriate increment revenues. Escambia County says it plans to put that money into a trust fund that benefits the relevant Community

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