

## Law firm that represented victim in Sandusky scandal to take on suit against Lancaster Country Day



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Lancaster Country Day School.

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A Philadelphia law firm that represented a victim in the Jerry Sandusky sex abuse scandal will take on the lawsuit against Lancaster Country Day School over its response to allegations that a student used artificial intelligence to generate nude images of classmates.

Nadeem Bezar, an attorney and partner at Kline & Specter, confirmed Friday that he will be representing some of the victims and their families in a lawsuit against the Manheim Township private school. Bezar said the number of victims and families he may represent is evolving and he was unsure of the exact number Friday afternoon.

"Anytime there's been a violation of this type, whether it involves an actual physical touching or contact or a violation of a person's most private part of their psyche – that's traumatic," Bezar said in answering why his firm will take on the case. "I can't imagine a young person putting their image out there when they're in this really personal and exposed position ... if that could have been prevented it should have been."





A writ of summons naming the school, Head of School Matt Micciche and board of trustees President Angela Ang-Alhadeff was filed Thursday with the Lancaster County Prothonotary Office. Forty-six minors and their parents or guardians are included as plaintiffs in the summons but are not named in order to maintain confidentiality of the victims. A writ of summons is a legal document that informs a defendant they are being sued and must appear in court to respond to the allegations.

Legal action was initiated by Matthew Faranda-Diedrich, an attorney with the Philadelphia-based law firm Royer Cooper Cohen Braunfeld. He said allegations in the forthcoming suit are the same as stated in a letter previously addressed to Country Day board of trustees in which parents, represented by Faranda-Diedrich, threatened to sue Country Day unless Micciche and Ang-Alhadeff resigned within 48 hours of it being sent Monday.

Neither Micciche and Ang-Alhadeff have resigned as of Friday.

Bezar said he was unsure if Faranda-Diedrich would remain on the case once he is added.

Parents allege that Micciche failed as a mandated reporter to notify the authorities when in November 2023 he received an initial tip alerting him to the presence of child sexual abuse and pornographic material through the Safe2Say Something. Through the online anonymous tip service, run by the state attorney's general office, students, parents and staff can submit tips and concerns about potential youth violence.

Police did not begin investigating until a second allegation was made against the student who is accused of creating the AI-generated images. That student was removed from the school and their phone was seized by the Susquehanna Regional Police Department in August.

Adults who are considered mandated reporters are required to report suspected child abuse if they have reasonable cause to suspect a child is a victim of abuse. Not doing so is a criminal offense in Pennsylvania.

About Kline & Specter, Bezar

Bezar has a history of litigating cases involving sex crimes and abuse of minors where one or more parties was negligent in reporting or oversight related to the crime. His practice concentrates on medical negligence, catastrophic personal injury and cases involving child abuse and human trafficking.

For example, Bezar arbitrated a case in which \$37.5 million was awarded to three women who were sex trafficked as minors at numerous hotels in Philadelphia. Complaints argued that the hotels where sex trafficking took place should have been aware of the trafficking.

The case involved several counts of negligence, negligent infliction of emotional distress, as well as negligent training, hiring and supervision on the part of the hotels where the sex trafficking took place.

Bezar joined the firm around 2016 after gaining more than 20 years experience with another Philadelphia firm at which he was a partner – Kolsby, Gordon, Robin, Shore & Bezar. In 2023, he was inducted as a member of the International Academy of Trial Lawyers, an international fellowship of lawyers that limits U.S. membership to 500 attorneys.

He received his undergraduate degree in math and psychology from Bates College in Maine, his master's degree in engineering from the University of Massachusetts and his law degree from the Temple University Beasley School of Law.



Bezar's firm, Kline & Specter, carries weight in sex abuse cases, too.

A namesake and founding partner of the firm, Tom Kline, represented a victim who was abused by Sandusky, then-assistant football coach at Penn State University. Sandusky was charged for abusing dozens of victims.

The settlement, though not revealed, was a substantial part of \$60 million that the university agreed to pay all the victims, according to Kline & Specter's website.

The claim of that victim, identified as victim number five, was the first to be finalized of at least 30 other suits against the university, according to a 2013 report by CNN. Victims had sued the school saying it knew about the abuse but didn't act on the knowledge.

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