



## **Hanover County NAACP v. Hanover County & Hanover County School Board**

The Hanover County Unit of the NAACP has filed suit against Hanover County and the Hanover County School Board to change the names of Lee-Davis High School and Stonewall Jackson Middle School.

### **Why is the NAACP suing?**

- The NAACP wants to create an inclusive school community that welcomes all children in Hanover County to access equal education opportunities.
- Today, members of the NAACP, including students and parents of children zoned in Lee-Davis and Stonewall Jackson's districts, face the racist history embedded in these names and mascots. Students are forced to attend schools cheering for the "Confederates" or the "Rebels," and wear school paraphernalia bearing the name of Confederate leaders in order to participate in school activities.
- Hanover County has a long history of denying African Americans an equal opportunity for public education. In the late 1950s, the County named Lee-Davis High School and Stonewall Jackson Middle School after Confederate generals as part of Virginia's "Massive Resistance" to desegregation.
- The Hanover County School Board has refused to change the names. Over the years, students, alumni, and community members have been urging the Hanover County School Board to change the names of these schools. In 2018, the NAACP and others in the community petitioned the School Board to change the names in the wake of the white supremacist rally in Charlottesville. Rather than reject these symbols of slavery and segregation, the School Board voted 5-2 to keep the school and mascot names.

### **What does the NAACP claim?**

The NAACP has brought claims under the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment, Compelled Speech claims under the First Amendment, and claims under the Equal Education Opportunity Act.

- The **Equal Protection Clause** protects African American members of the NAACP from being treated differently from others by Hanover County representatives.
- The **First Amendment** protects "free speech" but it also stops the government from forcing people to make statements they do not believe in—for example, wearing school uniforms or shirts that celebrate the Confederate soldiers and mascots.
- The **Equal Education Opportunity Act** requires schools to remove vestiges of segregation. The School Board has failed to do this since the 1960s, when it chose Confederate names that told every African American student that s/he was not welcome in Hanover County.

### **Who represents the NAACP?**

The Hanover County Unit of the NAACP is represented by the Washington Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights & Urban Affairs and Covington & Burling LLP.

### **How can I help?**

The NAACP urges its members and the community to keep pressuring Hanover County representatives to do the right thing. Confederate names and mascots are symbols of slavery and segregation and do not belong in Hanover County's public schools. Please contact **Robert Barnette, Hanover NAACP President, at [r.barnette@comcast.net](mailto:r.barnette@comcast.net)** if you would like to be involved.