

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF YORK

Leslie Richardson,

Plaintiff,

vs.

South Carolina Department of Transportation,
Fort Mill School District 4, and Nathan R.)
Pigford,)

Defendants.

) IN THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS
) SIXTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
)

) C.A. No.: 2026-CP-46-_____
)

) **SUMMONS**
)
)

TO: THE DEFENDANTS ABOVE-NAMED, YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED and required to answer the Complaint herein, a copy of which is herewith served upon you, and to serve a copy of your Answer to this Complaint upon the subscriber, at the address shown below, within thirty (30) days after service hereof, exclusive of the day of such service, and if you fail to answer the Complaint, judgment by default will be rendered against you for the relief demanded in the Complaint.

September 17, 2026
Anderson, South Carolina

/s/ Drew Bradshaw
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Attorneys for the Plaintiff

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA	)	IN THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS
COUNTY OF YORK	)	SIXTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
	)	
Leslie Richardson,	)	
	)	C.A. No.: 2026-CP-46-_____
Plaintiff,	)	
	)	
vs.	)	COMPLAINT
	)	(JURY TRIAL DEMANDED)
South Carolina Department of Transportation,	)	
Fort Mill School District 4, and Nathan R.)	)	
Pigford,	)	
	)	
Defendants.	)	

The Plaintiff above named, complaining of the Defendants herein, would respectfully show unto this Honorable Court and alleges as follows:

PARTIES, JURISDICTION AND VENUE

1. Plaintiff, Leslie Richardson (hereinafter referred to as “Plaintiff”), is a citizen and resident of York County, South Carolina.

2. Upon information and belief, Defendant South Carolina Department of Transportation (hereinafter “SCDOT”) is a division of the State of the South Carolina within the meaning of the South Carolina Tort Claims Act codified at South Carolina Code Ann. § 15-78-30(e). At all times relevant to the Plaintiff’s Complaint, SCDOT acted by and through its agents, contractors, and employees for the purpose of carrying on its business as the systematic planner of all construction, maintenance, inspection, and safe operation of the South Carolina highway system, including the roadway at issue, and therefore, it is liable for the negligent acts of its agents, contractors, and employees, under the theories of non-delegable duty and respondeat superior.

3. Defendant Fort Mill School District 4 (hereinafter “School District”) is located in York County, South Carolina. Catawba Ridge High School is a school located within the School

District and located in York County, South Carolina. Upon information and belief, School District is the entity which controls and is responsible for the actions and/or inactions of the employees and/or agents of Catawba Ridge High School.

4. Defendant Nathan R. Pigford (“Pigford”) is a resident and citizen of Fort Mill, South Carolina and was the at-fault party in an automobile wreck occurring on or about October 15, 2024.

5. This Court has personal jurisdiction over the Defendant(s) because Defendant(s) reside in or has enduring relationships with the state of South Carolina.

6. Venue is appropriate in York County due to the fact that the Defendant(s) is a resident of York County, South Carolina, and the wreck occurred in York County, South Carolina.

FACTUAL ALLEGATIONS

7. The Plaintiff reiterates each and every allegation above as if repeated verbatim herein.

8. At all relevant times, School District and SCDOT had actual and/or constructive notice of the absence, condition, or malfunction of a sign, signal, warning device, illumination device, guardrail, or median barrier and failed to correct the absence, condition, and/or malfunction within a reasonable time after actual or constructive notice despite being responsible for doing so.

9. Further, at all relevant times, the Plaintiff was a client of School District and SCDOT, and these Defendants otherwise owed various responsibilities or duties to the Plaintiff, including but not limited to protection and control, and those responsibilities and/or duties were exercised in a grossly negligent manner.

10. School District entered into an agreement titled “Crossing Guard Services Agreement” (“Agreement”) with Everything Parking, Inc. d/b/a Cross Safe (“Cross Safe”)

whereby Cross Safe would provide crossing-guard services to School District.

11. Pursuant to the Agreement, School District contracted for Cross Safe to provide crossing guards at specific locations selected by School District.

12. Pursuant to the Agreement, School District controlled and selected the locations at which it required crossing guards.

13. Pursuant to the Agreement, Cross Safe would provide personnel to carry out crossing-guard services at schools within School District at locations selected by School District.

14. On March 21, 2024, Stanley Eugene Buckner, a crossing guard employed by Cross Safe to perform crossing-guard services in York County, was struck by a motor vehicle and killed while performing crossing guard services at a specific location that was selected by School District in York County, South Carolina.

15. In April 2024, School District adopted an official resolution and submitted it to SCDOT, requesting that all school speed zones within the School District be reduced. The resolution also requested that SCDOT evaluate and implement any additional signage, signals, traffic control devices, or other safety measures deemed necessary or beneficial to protect School District's students, employees, and the traveling public on state roads serving the School District's schools.

16. Upon information and belief, SCDOT responded to School District's resolution by installing limited additional signage in certain areas and conducting brush removal in certain areas, but did not implement any other requested or necessary safety measures.

17. Catawba Ridge High School, located at 1180 Fort Mill Parkway, Fort Mill, South Carolina 29715, is a part of School District.

18. Upon information and belief, School District and Cross Safe contracted for Cross

Safe to provide crossing-guard services relating to bus and vehicular traffic on Fort Mill Parkway for Catawba Ridge High School between 8:00 a.m. and 9:00 a.m. and between 2:30 p.m. and 4:00 p.m.

19. At the time of the incident on October 15, 2024, the Plaintiff was providing crossing guard services at a specific location selected by School District. School District knew or should have known that this specific location was unsafe, unreasonably dangerous, and not an appropriate location for a school crossing guard to be located.

20. At the time of the incident on October 15, 2024, the Plaintiff was employed by Cross Safe for the purpose of providing crossing guard services related to Catawba Ridge High School on Fort Mill Parkway.

21. On October 15, 2024, while Plaintiff was performing crossing guard services, Defendant Pigford was traveling east on Fort Mill Parkway.

22. Ryan Fleming (“Fleming”) was the driver of another vehicle on Fort Mill Parkway. Fleming was stopped in his vehicle on Fort Mill Parkway at approximately 8:00 a.m. on October 15, 2024.

23. While Plaintiff was lawfully in the roadway performing crossing guard services, Defendant Pigford, driving at a high rate of speed and too fast for conditions, violently struck the rear-end of Fleming’s vehicle, causing Fleming’s vehicle to lurch forward and strike the Plaintiff, resulting in the Plaintiff’s severe, lifechanging injuries.

24. Upon information and belief, Plaintiff was the fourth (4th) school crossing guard struck and injured by oncoming traffic within the School District in the six (6) years preceding the incident at issue.

25. SCDOT has long been aware and on notice of the serious probability of a near fatal

death or issue in Fort Mill, South Carolina.

26. For these reasons and others, in the years prior to the collision at issue, the Defendants were on actual and/or constructive notice that York County in particular experienced a disproportionately high number of pedestrian involved collisions, and in particular Fort Mill Parkway in York County experienced an unusually high number of pedestrian involved collisions, with multiple occurring in 2024 alone.

27. At the time of Plaintiff's injuries, there existed a defective, poorly maintained, dangerous, and/or unsafe area at the location of the collision, including, but not limited to a defective, poorly maintained, and/or unsafe roadway area.

28. At all times material hereto, Defendants owed Plaintiff a duty to create and/or maintain the roadway in a reasonably safe condition.

FOR A FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION
(Negligence, Gross Negligence, Recklessness, Negligence Per Se – Defendant Pigford)

29. Plaintiff reiterates each and every allegation above as if repeated verbatim herein.

30. At all times Defendant Pigford owed a duty to the general public, including Plaintiff, to operate his vehicle in a safe manner and in compliance with the statutory and common laws of the State of South Carolina.

31. Defendant Pigford breached his duty owed to Plaintiff by carelessly, negligently, and recklessly operating his motor vehicle and subsequently causing catastrophic and permanent injuries to Plaintiff.

32. Plaintiff was acting in a reasonably prudent and careful manner at all times relevant hereto.

33. Defendant Pigford was negligent, negligent *per se*, grossly negligent, reckless, willful, and wanton in the following particulars:

- a. Driving a motor vehicle in such a manner as to indicate a willful, wanton, reckless, grossly negligent, and negligent disregard for the safety of others, in violation of S.C. Code Ann. § 56-5-2920;
 - b. Driving at an excessive and unreasonable rate of speed, in violation of S.C. Code Ann. § 56-6-1520;
 - c. Failing to obey traffic signs and traffic-control devices, in violation of S.C. Code Ann. § 56-5-950;
 - d. Failing to maintain a proper lookout;
 - e. Failing to keep his vehicle under proper control;
 - f. Failing to yield to a crossing guard;
 - g. Failing to use the degree or care and caution that a reasonably prudent person would have used under the same or similar circumstances; and
 - h. In such other and further particulars as the evidence at trial may show.
34. Defendant Pigford's negligence was the direct and proximate cause of Plaintiff's injuries.
35. Pigford's conduct was grossly negligent, willful, wanton, and/or reckless, and violative of numerous South Carolina statutes and laws, and as such warrants an award of punitive damages.
36. The Plaintiff seeks all actual and punitive damages available as to this Defendant under South Carolina law.

FOR A SECOND CAUSE OF ACTION
(Negligence / Gross Negligence – SCDOT and School District)

37. The Plaintiff reiterates each and every allegation above as if repeated verbatim herein.

38. Defendants SCDOT and School District owed a duty to maintain reasonably safe conditions for pedestrians and crossing guards.

39. Defendants SCDOT and School District breached their duties by failing to take reasonable steps to correct known hazardous conditions.

40. Defendant's actions and omissions include, but are not limited to:

- a. Creating or allowing an unreasonably dangerous environment on Fort Mill Parkway at or near Catawba Ridge High School;
- b. Failure to select a safe location for its crossing guards like Plaintiff to work;
- c. Failure to take reasonable safety measures to ensure the locations in which crossing guards like Plaintiff worked would be reasonably safe;
- d. Failure to exercise due care in the design, control, and/or monitoring of work being performed by crossing guards for the benefit of School District and its students and schools;
- e. Failure to implement proper safety protocols to protect drivers, passengers, pedestrians, and others using the state's highway system on Fort Mill Parkway on and around School District's schools;
- f. Failure to warn of dangerous conditions at School District's under circumstances where School District knew or reasonably should have known of such dangerous conditions;
- g. Failure to take preventative measures to ensure the crossing guard services could be conducted safely;
- h. Failure to address known safety risks;
- i. Failure to implement proper traffic control measures;

- j. Failure to ensure a safe environment for crossing guards;
- k. Negligently creating and/or constructing the area of the roadway where the Plaintiff was injured;
- l. Negligently allowing dangerous conditions to exist at the area of the roadway where the Plaintiff was injured;
- m. Failing to eliminate known dangerous conditions at the area of the roadway where the Plaintiff was injured;
- n. Failing to warn Plaintiff of these known, dangerous conditions;
- o. By otherwise negligently maintaining, inspecting, and/or repairing the area of the roadway where the Plaintiff was injured and/or the area surrounding; and
- p. In other such particulars that may be demonstrated at trial.

41. The conduct of Defendants SCDOT and School District was negligent, reckless, willful, and/or grossly negligent, and such conduct was a proximate cause of Plaintiff's injuries.

42. The Plaintiff is entitled to recover actual damages from the Defendants in an amount to be determined by the jury.

43. The Plaintiff has alleged a minimum of four "occurrences" as the term is used under the South Carolina Tort Claims Act, and accordingly, the Plaintiff may obtain an award against SCDOT and School District in excess of one million dollars even if a governmental Defendant is entitled to the protection of any caps pursuant to the South Carolina Tort Claims Act. *Boiter v. S.C.D.O.T.*, 393 S.C. 123, 125 (2011); *Chastain v. Anmed Health Found.*, 388 S.C. 170, 174, 694 S.E.2d 541, 543 (2010) ("more than one single act of negligence" constitutes multiple occurrences). The Plaintiff asks that the jury determine the number of occurrences.

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff prays for judgment against the Defendants, for an award of the damages specified hereinabove, for attorney's fees, for the reasonable costs of this action, and for such other and further relief as the court deems just and proper. Plaintiff specifically avers that the damages at issue in this case are more than \$100,000.00, such averment made to allow all manner of discovery under South Carolina law.

Respectfully submitted,

September 17, 2026
Anderson, South Carolina

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The Plaintiff demands a trial by jury.

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