

Jury trial approaches for Henrico teacher accused of sex assault on student

Anna Bryson



A Short Pump Middle School teacher who was accused of sexually assaulting a student on campus will appear in court for a three-day jury trial beginning May 31.

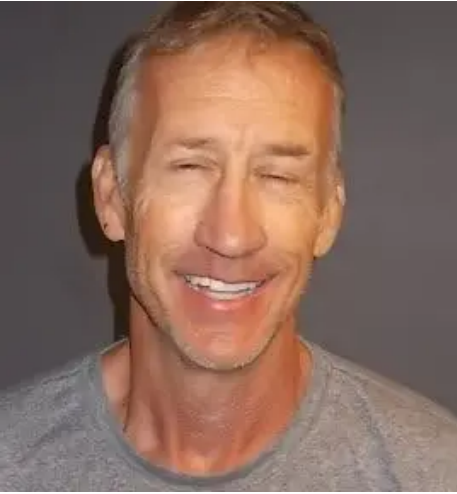
Dean Lakey, 60, allegedly committed the assaults in 2017 at Short Pump Middle School, according to court documents filed in Henrico County Circuit Court. The student who accused him was 14 at the time and is now 18 years old. She made the allegations last spring.

The girl said that Lakey sexually assaulted her inside of a restroom on campus several times, according to court documents.

After a long-term investigation, Henrico Police presented the case before the Richmond Metropolitan multi-jurisdictional grand jury Aug. 25 for six felonies.

Lakey was indicted for one count of rape, two counts of sodomy, and three counts of indecent liberties with a minor as a custodian.

He was [arrested](#) and served with the indictments by the Currituck County Sheriff's Office Sept. 2 in Currituck, North Carolina, where he was working a summer job, according to court documents. He waived his extradition and returned to Virginia, according to court records.



Dean Lakey (Courtesy Currituck County (N.C.) Sheriff's Office/OBXToday.com)

Lakey was later released on \$20,000 bail, according to court documents. He was ordered to avoid contact with all minors and be monitored by a tracking device.

Henrico County Public Schools placed the physical education teacher on paid administrative leave on April 19, 2021, and then changed his status to leave without pay on Sept. 8 after he was arrested. He remains on unpaid leave, according to a HCPS spokeswoman.

Lakey has continued to claim his innocence and retained retired Henrico County police officer Rick Vines to administer a polygraph test, which he "conclusively passed," according to court documents.

Lakey lives in Glen Allen and was a teacher with Henrico County Public Schools for 32 years, the last 30 at Short Pump Middle School. He had no criminal record prior to this case.

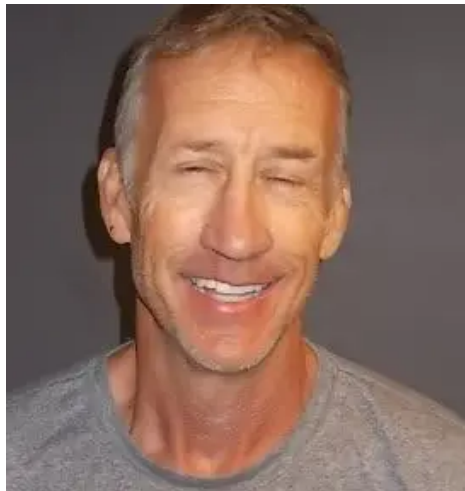
The trial will be heard before Henrico Circuit Court Judge L.A. Harris on May 31, June 1 and June 2 at the Henrico Circuit Court. Lakey is being represented by Richmond-based attorney Craig Cooley, who declined to comment before the trial.

Correction: The alleged victim was 14 years old when the alleged assault occurred.

Anna Bryson is the Henrico Citizen's education reporter and a Report for America corps member. [Make a tax-deductible donation](#) to support her work, and RFA will match it dollar for dollar. Sign up [here](#) for her free weekly education newsletter.

Henrico teacher's accuser takes stand during first day of sexual assault trial

Anna Bryson



Dean Lakey (Courtesy Currituck County (N.C.) Sheriff's Office/OBXToday.com)

The trial of a longtime Short Pump Middle School gym teacher accused of sexually assaulting a student got underway Tuesday in Henrico, with his accuser taking the stand.

Assistant Commonwealth's Attorney Kelly Cotting, who is prosecuting the case, painted a picture of the alleged victim as a shy, socially awkward girl who stutters and sometimes vomits when nervous.

Defendant Dean Lakey, on the other hand, was "essentially the king of Short Pump Middle School," Cotting said. He exploited that dynamic and used his status to make her feel she could never come forward, she said in her opening statement.

The girl was 14 years old when the alleged assault happened. She is now 18. (The Citizen is not naming her because she was a minor at the time of the alleged incident.)

When the alleged victim was questioned on the stand by Cotting on Tuesday, she was shaking, crying and could barely talk at times.

She described Lakey coming into the bathroom at Short Pump Middle School, pushing her onto the sink and assaulting her from behind.

Lakey has denied that he ever touched or had any sexual interaction with the girl. His attorney, Craig Cooley, said that Lakey "couldn't really" even recall her as one of his students.

Lakey was indicted in August for six felonies: one count of rape, two counts of sodomy, and three counts of indecent liberties with a minor as a custodian. Last week, the charges were amended to one count of indecent liberties and one count of object sexual battery.

(View more coverage from our television partner, WTVR-6, below)

The alleged victim said last year that she was raped by Lakey on several occasions during his gym class when she would leave to use the restroom. The two remaining charges are in relation to a singular instance, which is the first time the alleged victim said she was attacked. She said Tuesday that it was her "strongest testimony."

The defense focused on the issues of no witnesses, no DNA evidence and no corroboration.

Cooley's line of questioning Tuesday centered on inconsistencies in the alleged victim's statement and testimony, a common tactic for the defense in cases in which there is a delay in reporting a sexual assault case.

When the girl claimed the assault happened at Short Pump Middle School, Lakey was coaching basketball at Deep Run High School, Cooley said.

Another inconsistency Cooley noted is that the girl said she was locked in the bathroom and assaulted, yet there is no working lock on that specific bathroom where the attack allegedly occurred. Another noted hole in the claim, Cooley said, is the existence of a gate that separates the gym and nearby bathroom from the rest of the school. The gate goes down around 4 p.m. each day, according to Cooley and an instructional aide at SPMS who testified. The alleged victim said she had never seen the gate before.

The alleged victim repeatedly said Tuesday that there are many things she does not entirely remember because the alleged assault occurred upwards of four years ago.

The girl never wanted to report it to the police, she said.

Her then-boyfriend, who testified Tuesday, said that she used have nightmares about Lakey, and wake up in the middle of the night sweating and shaking. She wouldn't be able to recognize him, the ex-boyfriend said Tuesday. He also said she was afraid of using public bathrooms.

The couple got into a fight one day, which "boiled over, the boyfriend said, and he told his parents about the girl's assault. His mother, who is a state mandated reporter of child abuse, reported the alleged incident to Child Protective Services.

The trial will resume before Henrico Circuit Court Judge L.A. Harris at 9:45 a.m. on Wednesday at the Henrico Circuit Court. The trial is expected to end Thursday, and will be decided by the 13 jurors selected Tuesday morning.

Anna Bryson is the Henrico Citizen's education reporter and a Report for America corps member. [Make a tax-deductible donation](#) to support her work, and RFA will match it dollar for dollar. Sign up [here](#) for her free weekly education newsletter.

On trial's second day, Henrico gym teacher charged with sexual assault takes the stand

Anna Bryson

Lakey denies guilt; defense calls five current, former colleagues as character witnesses

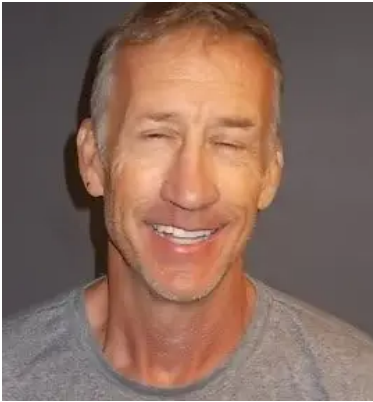


Henrico Circuit Court (Henrico Citizen/ Anna Bryson)

On the second day of his sexual assault trial Wednesday, Short Pump Middle School teacher Dean Lakey took the stand and completely denied that he had assaulted a 14-year-old student at the school in 2017.

The girl, who is now 18, alleged that Lakey assaulted her in a restroom on school campus after one of her Technology Student Association meetings that March.

In his testimony on Wednesday, Lakey presented a handwritten calendar showing every March TSA meeting and every activity in which he participated during that month. His schedule was accompanied by pieces of evidence, including screenshots of texts from multiple people in March 2017, his coaching schedule, airline tickets, itemized Wegmans receipts, credit card receipts, the school division's log of dates and times Lakey drove students on the school bus, which days the victim was absent from school, and others.



Dean Lakey (Courtesy Currituck County (N.C.) Sheriff's Office/OBXToday.com)

The prosecutor, Assistant Henrico Commonwealth's Attorney Kelly Cotting, argued that there was no time to verify the calendar, text messages and receipts because Lakey and his attorney didn't provide the evidence to the state prior to Wednesday.

The state did not produce a search warrant for his phone beforehand or ask for one. Lakey said in court Wednesday that he would hand his phone over to jurors on the spot so they could see the text messages for themselves. Lakey also said that he could not have provided all of the information on the calendar to Child Protective Services prior to his arrest because he did not know what he was accused of, by whom, or when the alleged incident occurred.

Cotting objected to the introduction of the calendar, but Henrico Circuit Court Judge L.A. Harris overruled her objection.

In his testimony, Lakey also described being arrested in Currituck, North Carolina in September. He apparently cried as he told the jury how he had his 2-and-a-half-month-old dog with him when he was arrested, and the dog was taken to the pound.

Before Lakey's testimony, the prosecution brought forward two witnesses earlier Wednesday. A woman who worked as a nurse at Short Pump Middle School from 2014 to 2018 said she saw Lakey in the P.E. hallway, where the assault allegedly occurred, several times a week, and also saw students in the hall after school.

The prosecution also called expert witness Briana Valentino, a forensic interviewer at Greater Richmond SCAN Child Advocacy Center. Valentino, who does not know the victim, explained to the jury why children often delay reporting sexual abuse.

Lakey's attorney, Craig Cooley, moved early Wednesday to strike both of the charges against Lakey – object sexual battery and taking indecent liberties with a minor – saying that there are “so many inconsistencies” and that the victim's testimony is “inherently unacceptable.”

The prosecution is not legally required to provide corroboration. His motion was overruled; the jury must decide the case.

Lakey was indicted in August for six felonies: one count of rape, two counts of sodomy, and three counts of indecent liberties with a minor as a custodian. Last week, the charges were amended to one count of indecent liberties and one count of object sexual battery.

The victim last year said that she was raped by Lakey on several occasions during his gym class when she would leave to use the restroom. The two remaining charges are in relation to a singular instance, which is the first time the alleged victim said she was attacked. She said Tuesday that it was her “strongest testimony.”

In her testimony Tuesday, the victim described being sexually assaulted by Lakey in a school bathroom. She didn't tell anyone for years because she didn't think anyone would believe her, she said.

Cooley brought in seven witnesses on Wednesday morning, five of whom are former or current P.E. teachers who taught with Lakey at SPMS.

The five teachers testified to Lakey's character, and several said that Lakey had never left a class unattended.

The prosecution and defense finished presenting all of their evidence on Wednesday before court adjourned for the day. The trial will resume Thursday morning at 9:30 a.m., and both sides will give their closing statements before jury deliberations.