Former headmaster accuses Nicholas Sparks of being racist, homophobic

By **WCTI Staff**

NEW BERN, CRAVEN COUNTY -

Best-selling author Nicholas Sparks is being sued by a former Jewish headmaster of his school in New Bern, who accuses him of being a homophobic, anti-Semitic racist, according to lawsuit documents obtained by NewsChannel 12.

Saul Hillel Benjamin is a former headmaster at the Epiphany School for Global Studies on Trent Road in New Bern, a school that Sparks founded in 2006.

Benjamin is now suing Sparks. According to documents of the lawsuit sent to NewsChannel 12 by attorney Douglas Wigdor, Benjamin claims he complained to Sparks and others that the school had only two African-Americans out of 514 students. Benjamin claims that Sparks responded by saying, "Black students are too poor and can't do the academic work."

According to the lawsuit documents, Benjamin also claims Sparks was angry when Benjamin met with the NAACP. Sparks allegedly told Benjamin to "engage only in private and less visible contact with African Americans," the lawsuit says.

Sparks also allegedly ignored bullying claims by gay students, even supported a student group that wanted to enact a "Homo-caust," the lawsuit continues.

In addition, Benjamin claims he was publicly humiliated by Sparks by forcing Benjamin to get up in front of the entire school and justify his Jewish heritage, the lawsuit says. Benjamin claims parents insulted him during the presentation while the school board applauded.

Benjamin claims he was fired from his headmaster position by Sparks, who allegedly told other school officials to ignore Benjamin because he had Alzheimer's.

NewsChannel 12 is reaching out to Sparks' representative to get his side of the story.