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At a contentious public meeting in Mount Vernon, Ohio, on July 7, 2008, the district school board scheduled a hearing for teacher John Freshwater to contest his planned firing. Freshwater has been accused of teaching "intelligent design" creationism in his biology classes, and of using a piece of lab equipment to brand a cross on a student's arm.

*The Columbus Dispatch* [reports](#) [4] (July 7, 2008), "The Mount Vernon eighth-grade science teacher who has been under scrutiny for focusing on creationism and intelligent design in his classes will contest his planned firing at an Aug. 26 hearing. The date was announced tonight during a school board meeting in which several supporters for John Freshwater publicly chastised the school board for its plans to fire him. Darcy Miller, whose son was taught by Freshwater, derided school administrators for singling out Freshwater when she said other teachers freely offer their opinions in the classroom. 'They [the administration] dug up any dirt they could that would put John Freshwater in the light of being a zealot shoving Christianity down the throats of his students,' Miller said."

Freshwater [told](#) [5] the Associated Press (July 9, 2008) that he was disappointed with the way in which the investigation that resulted in the school board deciding to fire him was conducted, saying, "They used half-truths. They didn't interview people who had been in my classroom ... Science teachers at the high school: Why would you interview them?" But the *Dispatch* explains: "An investigator for the district found that Freshwater's teachings undermined science education in the public school district and that his students had to be re-taught science principles when they got into higher grades. The family of one of

Freshwater's former students who had a cross burned onto his arm by the teacher sued the school district and Freshwater last month. The suit says the boy's civil rights were violated."

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