

Mark Bonkiewicz

From: Thomas Ciesielka <tc@tcpr.net>
Sent: Tuesday, September 11, 2018 2:46 PM
To: Mark Bonkiewicz
Subject: Message for Mark RE: Colorado School Parents Celebrate Victory Over School-Based Pornography

Mark,

Since you are familiar with the work of the Thomas More Society and Matt Heffron, I wanted to share this news with you.

Last Friday the Cherry Creek School District confirmed that it has discontinued purchasing or using any products for students from EBSCO. Parents complained that the EBSCO database for students included pornography. (details below).

Please let me know if you would like to speak with an attorney who represented the concerned parents.

Best regards,

Tom Ciesielka, TC Public Relations 312-422-133

Colorado School Parents Celebrate Victory Over School-Based Pornography

After Two Years of Parental Persistence, the Cherry Creek School District Discontinues its Contract with EBSCO, the Nation's Largest Purveyor of Pornography to School Children

Contact: Tom Ciesielka, 312.422.1333, tc@tcpr.net

(September 11, 2018 – Denver, CO) Parents are claiming a major victory after one of the largest school districts in Colorado acknowledged last Friday it has discontinued purchasing or using any products for students from EBSCO, a company that imbeds pornography in its databases marketed for unsuspecting school children across the nation.

For the last two years, a group of parents and citizens – with recent assistance from the Thomas More Society -- have waged an unrelenting struggle against the Denver-area Cherry Creek School District. Parents have requested either that the district require EBSCO to clean up its database for school children or to cancel its EBSCO contract altogether.

EBSCO provides online research databases to over 55,000 elementary, middle- and high-schools across the country. It markets its databases for school children specifically as being age-appropriate and reliable. But unknown to most parents, the databases are anything but safe or kid-friendly.

Starting in September, 2016, parents in Aurora discovered these databases marketed for school children contain substantial amounts of easily accessible, hardcore pornography. And they discovered the EBSCO database system renders inoperable school internet filters and private, parent-supplied internet filters.

Unsuspecting school children, believing themselves to be using a safe school research database, easily can stumble into these sexually explicit materials while searching otherwise benign topics on EBSCO databases.

Due to the materials EBSCO provides to school children, the National Center on Sexual Exploitation named EBSCO to both its 2017 and 2018 “Dirty Dozen List” of the worst twelve corporations in America that perpetuate sexual exploitation.

“We are just happy the school district finally is doing the right thing,” said Dr. Robin Paterson, one of the parents most involved in the effort. “It’s taken two years,” she said. “But better late than never.”

When asked whether the school district’s action was in response to parental pressure, Dr. Paterson said, “There’s no way of knowing for sure. Cherry Creek School District has been so combative with parents about this, we wouldn’t be surprised if they deny that parents were the cause of this decision.”

“What we know for sure,” she said, “is that the school district was not looking at this until we started pressuring them – going on for more than two years now. Without parental pressure, it’s highly unlikely Cherry Creek would have discontinued buying EBSCO products. So we look at this as a victory for parents’ rights.”

The parents’ group had retained the Thomas More Society to represent it. In fact, the Society had a law suit prepared and ready for filing when word came that Cherry Creek School District had decided to discontinue its contract with EBSCO.

“We don’t know if Cherry Creek had any information about the law suit being prepared,” said the Thomas More Society Senior Counsel Matt Heffron. “But we weren’t being very secretive about it. There were many people who were aware it was in the works.”

While this is a major milestone, the parents do not consider their efforts in Colorado to be completed yet. The parents’ group intends to continue to monitor the situation in the Cherry Creek School District. “And keep in mind,” said Dr. Paterson, “EBSCO still is supplying its pornographic databases to school children in school districts across Colorado. So we’re not done yet.”

The Thomas More Society has been contacted by parents in other states as well about related abuses in school “comprehensive” sex education programs. In April this year, the Society filed a law suit against a Chicago public school, (*Wagenmaker et al (parents) v. Kenner et al. (Whitney Young administrators)*), forcing the school to cancel the appearance of a sex columnist for its sexual education programming for 7th through 12th graders. The school had violated provisions of the Illinois School Code requiring effective notice to parents. It also violated Illinois law requiring emphasis on abstinence and avoidance of risky sexual behaviors by booking the sex columnist, whose extensive online articles advocated casual hook-up sex, pornography use, and other risky sex behaviors.

About the Thomas More Society

The Thomas More Society is a national not-for-profit law firm dedicated to restoring respect in law for life, family, and religious liberty. Headquartered in Chicago and Omaha, the Thomas More Society fosters support for these causes by providing high quality pro bono legal services from local trial courts all the way up to the United States Supreme Court. For more information, visit thomasmoresociety.org.