

# **The State of Catholic Schooling**

**by Anne Taylor**

Catholic schools have been near and dear to my heart for many years. My husband and I were both products of Catholic education. While he grew up remembering changes during the Second Vatican Council, I was a product of the years following in a culture of the 80s with Madonna, Prince and generation of MTV.

During these years, I recall the imprint stamp marks inside our math, history and science books labeled, “Property of Poland Public School District,” a public school district just outside of Youngstown, Ohio. While that stamp mark was seared in my memory, I look back and wonder what it all meant at the time: Why did a private school – Catholic no less – have a stamp mark endowed with public school markings?

Little did I realize the school of hard knocks would lead me to understand the meaning behind this.

I’ve spent nearly a decade following our education system, specifically with regard to our intrusive Federal Education system. From Common Core, ESSA (Every Student Succeeds Act), SEL (Social Emotional Learning), to data collection and student surveys, while fighting to protect parental rights.

I became involved with the legislature and testified for and against various bills, including surveys that removed freedoms not only from parents but for teachers as well. I, too, was part of the opt-out movement in standardized testing and student sexuality surveys.

There were hours of sacrificed time and late nights witnessing the passage of laws, reading bills not only in our state but those at the federal level. I learned that testifying both for and against various bills was the only way to stand up for those holding Christian values including all families with children in public school. The experience even led me to run for office twice in my district for state house representative. Those were the years I felt strongly led to understand and report on the movements of state government.

All of this got blown out of the water in the wake of COVID-19 and distance learning. Insert a pandemic and the timing seemed all too perfect. If you understand any of the Common Core initiatives from 2010, you will know that in order for schools to receive funding the exchange was not just crappy math, but that of copyrighted standards and digital learning foisted on schools. No matter the security of firewalls installed children at some point WILL be exposed to everything from gender ideology to desensitizing and grooming our children long before we parents ever have an opportunity to have these conversations with them.

And that includes Scholastic: The largest children’s publishing company in the world.

When my husband and I enrolled our youngest child in Catholic school in 2017 we expected battles with curriculum since this private school took Federal Funding.

I was told a mere few hundred dollars of this applied to each child, but also aware the exchange of hands meant that by taking any handout from an overreaching federal entity leads to a whole host of issues that truly tip its hat to that of public school education. And that includes its ideologies and a third party global book fair company to back it.

In the spring of 2020, and just shortly before the distance learning COVID fiasco began, my husband and I sat down with former Principal [Michael McGinty now Associate Director of Catholic Schools - Operations;](#)

[Department of Catholic Schools in the St. Paul-Minneapolis Archdiocese](#), to review some of the Scholastic finds in our school.

We were told there was a small group of parents who scan and review Scholastic's books prior to the fair each year for disturbing material, but also suggested it was near impossible to weed out.

Books for "tween reads" in a school serving PreK to 6<sup>th</sup> grade, displayed a darkened and disturbing culture. We were told by the former principal the stories "might be okay," but agreed the covers are not appealing and that they do their best to work with Scholastic on alternative book cover options.

This was beginning to sound like a cover up to me.

A social justice table display had not one book on our Founding Fathers. The late Justice Ruth Ginsberg, while a woman of her time, instead took front and center. You might as well have put Planned Parenthood founder Margaret Sanger next to the honorable Ginsberg, but then Girl Scouts is proudly featured in many Catholic schools...more on that in a moment.

While effort was made towards having a "biblical" display table on God on books from Scholastic, there was nothing there to represent the Catholic faith in a year the school was honoring the Saints. Even the principal himself admitted, "It was weak." But it really didn't matter as a Beyoncé took front and center at a neighboring table in the kiddie section.

Just the previous year I spotted my oldest child's favorite Daisy Meadows series "[Rainbow Magic](#)." That nostalgia was quickly squelched as the cover featured an African-American fairy dawning the infamous, "Pink Pussycat Hat" from that famously known year of 2016.

And then there is the "[Yona of the Dawn](#)" by Mizuho Kusanagi section where reader blogs boast: "Trigger warnings: murder, violence, loss of loved ones, Yona crushing on her cousin (ew), sexual harassment, snakes and snake bites," according to a Good Reads blogger. This sounds lovely for a fourth or fifth grader, right?

Unfortunately, parents allowed the teachers to trot their kids down to the book fair with money in tow.

Circling back to Girl Scouts and Planned Parenthood, Scholastic sponsored book "[SMILE: A Graphic Novel](#)" by Raina Telgemeier, was not only sold at our school book fair, but also given as a gift to my child during 2nd grade by a classmate. That same book I learned can also be found in Barnes and Noble and Target stores.

The book begins praising the work of Girl Scouts then quickly introduces a tale of a 6th grader about the highs and lows of boys and braces featuring graphic cartoons. The images clearly were not at all appropriate for a 2nd grader. Images that included grizzly scenes from an orthodontic chair and drug references, dressing the 6th grader as a hooker from her scout pals as an initiation, scenes from playing "spin the bottle" and showing how the girl was humiliated by being de-pants before peers during lunch as a joke.

According to "[The Book Worm](#)", a young reader's blog, "[Smile](#)" is a fine read for those in PreK to 6th grade according to the site.

Look at the pictures and then decide if it's something for your three, five, or eight year old daughter. While I did not have an opportunity to hunt down the parent who permitted such a book to be given to my child (thanks COVID), I have to wonder whether the parent had even read the book.

In 2018, I was questioned by a group of moms who insisted that Girl Scouts continue to meet at our Catholic school after some Catholic schools themselves were raising concerns about ties to Planned Parenthood via The World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGGS). WAGGGS has been a long standing advocate for contraception and “abortion rights” on behalf of its girl members, the majority of whom are minors according to [“Girl Scouts, Why Not?”](#)

I thought Catholic schools stood on the rights of the unborn from conception to natural death.

Speaking of “gifts,” and most disappointing of all, our family discovered one of the books our child and her classmates received from their Kindergarten teacher was officially dubbed a ‘soft’ introduction to transgenderism for children, [“Red: A Crayon’s Story”](#) by Michael Hall.

Research revealed the Scholastic book is a favorite among teachers in the name of “self-acceptance.”

While it was my understanding no one showed up to my child’s class identifying as transgender, this does happen to be the case in many schools as a “diversity and tolerance lesson” as highlighted in an article making headlines at a [California school](#) by outraged parents in 2017.

Certainly many of us won’t see this in our Catholic school libraries or book fairs would we? Teachers wouldn’t dare teach ideologies or theories that contradict the church. Could they? And if they did, are they themselves aware, or like our very own society, fallen into the hands of years of corruption among unions and government authority the same way Bella Dodd did in her controversial memoir [School of Darkness](#)? It only takes one publisher gone global to accomplish just that.

As author [Alex Newman](#) in his book “Crimes of the Educators” recently quipped at a speaking engagement for [Child Protection League Action’s](#) Invincible Liberty Conference last year, “Buyer beware in the private schools...”

In her article, [“Why Catholic Schools Should Scrap Scholastic Book Fairs”](#) author, Jean Schoonover-Egolf of Crisis Magazine explains that, “In addition to serving up ready-to-display cartons of merchandise for schools’ on-campus fairs, they are the leading provider of school and classroom libraries. Scholastic offers plenty of financial perks to the schools and teachers who drive sales by both distributing and aggregating students’ order forms. Scholastic.com features nearly 70 books with sexually explicit and gender-bending themes...(thus) permeating every age group, grade, reading level, and genre of the books in their flyers and fairs.”

In 2019, author [Joy Pullmann of the The Federalist](#) exposed Scholastic’s latest school catalog explaining how the long known children’s book company saturates kids with not only identity politics, but that of same-sex attraction and gender identity confusion.

And while the covers of these books may not clearly show themselves to what avails inside, you may want to remove that flyer that just came home in your child’s backpack – or maybe even your child’s school email account! But it is going to take more than that.

According to the annual shareholders’ report, Scholastic Company’s gross annual revenue for the fiscal year 2016 reached over 1.6 billion dollars. However, due to COVID-19 school closings in 2020, overall fiscal revenues declined 10% versus the previous year to \$1.49 billion, according to [Scholastic’s 2019/2020 annual report](#). Imagine the loss in revenue should ALL private schools relinquish their long held contracts with private schools in the United States alone!

Fair warning that according to [Richard Robinson, Chairman, President and Chief Executive Officer of Scholastic](#), it seems the company not only embraces “the current moment of social uprising, respect for the diverse groups in our multicultural society and a commitment to build a society free of prejudice and hate” but also supports that of a growing number of books embracing the new age death culture as exemplified in this recent trailer featuring K.R. Alexander’s book “[The Collected](#)” and many others.

Parents must rise up now and speak out in order for our children to receive a Godly, Catholic education. Parents must demand that our schools return to a loving and positive environment. There are simply no more excuses. Bottom line, Scholastic does NOT belong in ANY school claiming to teach to a high moral standard, as in the case of private Catholic education.

I’m not sure how Catholic schools that support Scholastic and take on public funding today can say this is the way to celebrate its students. In light of national Catholic Schools Week, I hope people will look into our experience as it’s important for parents to look at what kinds of books are being given to children, and books sold by Scholastic. Could this be happening in your private Protestant or Christian school or even homeschool group?

There are some great Catholic schools who are conscientious about these things. You just have to seek them out.