

VERDICTS & SETTLEMENTS

Jury returns \$5M verdict against Wichita private school

■ ERIN ACHENBACH



Plaintiff's attorneys David Mayer (L) and Reed Martens

A \$5 million verdict was reached in a personal injury suit filed in Sedgwick County, Kansas, District Court.

The verdict was reached Nov. 13, 2025, following an eight-day jury trial in the teacher/student sexual abuse case. The defendant, Trinity Academy Inc., a private school in Wichita, was found 74 percent at fault.

Of the verdict, \$2.5 million was for past pain and suffering damages and \$2.5 million for future pain and suffering damages, with an offset for comparative fault. The plaintiff ultimately received \$3.7 million. The jury also authorized punitive damages, which the judge will determine at a later date.

The plaintiff was represented by lead attorney Reed Martens of Monsees & Mayer in Kansas City, as well as David Mayer of Monsees & Mayer, Rick Morefield of Morefield, Speicher, Bachman in Overland Park, Kansas, and Mike

Wyatt and Jesse Tanksley of Mann, Wyatt, Tanksley in Hutchinson, Kansas.

The defendant was represented by lead attorney Michelle Stewart of the Hinkle Law Firm in Lenexa, Kansas, along with Suzanne Bruss and Mayda Stallbaumer of the Hinkle Law Firm.

Both parties brought in experts. The plaintiff's experts were Dr. Frank Sheboy of the School Liability Expert Group and damages/psychologist expert Dr. Lauren Richerson, while the expert for the defendant was Dr. Julie Hall.

"The insurance company made an offer before the case was filed that insulted our client and the harm she suffered. At that point, our client made the brave decision to move forward and tell her story. When the insurance company finally got serious about settlement, our client stood up for herself and told them it was too late," Martens said. "The jury heard her story and entered a substantial verdict holding the school accountable, including a finding of punitive damages."

"We are grateful for our co-counsel, Mike Wyatt, Jesse Tanksley and Rick Morefield. Their work was endless and masterful. This result would not have been possible without them, Martens added. "Opposing counsel was great to work with as well. They fought tirelessly for their client and were professional throughout trial."

Counsel for the defendant could not be reached for comment.

Total value: \$3.7 million

Allocation of fault: 74 percent against defendant

Type of action: Other personal injury

Type of action description:

Student/Teacher Sexual Abuse

Venue: Sedgwick County, Kansas, District Court

Case Number/Date: SG-2024-CV-001995, 11/13/2025

Injuries alleged: Sexual, physical, emotional and spiritual abuse

Plaintiff Attorney(s):

Reed Martens and David Mayer Monsees & Mayer in Kansas City; Rick Morefield of Morefield, Speicher, Bachman in Overland Park, Kansas; and Mike Wyatt and Jesse Tanksley of Mann, Wyatt, Tanksley in Hutchinson, Kansas

Defendant Attorney(s):

Michelle Stewart, Suzanne Bruss and Mayda Stallbaumer of the Hinkle Law Firm in Lenexa, Kansas

Plaintiff Expert(s): Dr. Frank Sheboy of the School Liability Expert Group and damages/psychologist expert Dr. Lauren Richerson

Defendant Expert(s): Dr. Julie Hall, damages/psychologist expert, Dr. Lauren Richerson (Kansas City)