

Former officer pleads guilty to sex charge involving juveniles

By [Kathy Lynn Gray](#)

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A Westerville man who was a Columbus police officer for 26 years pleaded guilty this morning to coercing and enticing two minor girls for sex.

An FBI investigation found that Todd Smith, 50, lured two Centennial High School students into sexual relationships with him when he worked at the Columbus school.

Smith's trial had been scheduled in U.S. District Court in Columbus this month, but he signed a plea deal in December.

He'd been charged in October with two counts of coercing a minor for sex and one count each of sexting with a minor and attempted production of sexual images of a minor. Each of the girls sent at least one photo of herself topless to Smith, and one of the girls exchanged 6,000 texts with him.

One of the girls told investigators that Smith met her in his office while a school play was being presented in the auditorium. Wearing his gun belt and uniform, he tried to have sex with her but couldn't perform. At that point, the girl performed oral sex on him.

After today's hearing, Smith was returned to jail, where he's been since his arrest in July.

A lawsuit filed by one of the girls' mothers against Smith and the city of Columbus is on hold until the federal case is resolved. She argues in the lawsuit that Smith was not adequately supervised when he was the Centennial resource officer.

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