



Parent Personal Stories March 2008

My children go to Maconaquah High School. In all fairness, this is a good school. I have some reservations about it and have butted heads with the faculty several times. My son is 17 and is a junior. He will be 18 in December. My daughter will soon be 16 and is a sophomore. I feel that they will be alright to graduate in public school (if they have to). My daughter has plans to be a CNA through our career program here at MHS. Then she plans to have enough hours to have her LPN by the time she graduates. She then wants to enlist into the military and earn her medical degree to become an ER physician. My son has no set plans at this time.

However, I am soon to get guardianship of a girl who will be 17. She comes from a rather sad background. She was taken out of school in 6th grade and has had no formal education since then. She became a ward of the state and then came here to live with me for a while. She did well in school until she got expelled for something that, in my opinion, was an offense that could have been rectified by suspension. I put her in what is called "alternative school" here. In this public school program, she was only allowed to earn 2 credits per semester. She was not allowed to bring any work home to get any help with it. Needless to say, I felt that this was a colossal waste of time for her and us. Well, then she decided to give her biological mother another chance to be able to live with her. She promptly got expelled from that school, and the foster mother did nothing to help mitigate the circumstances. The foster mother didn't even try to help her earn even 1 graduation credit. She just stayed home and helped her foster mother with her daycare business for free.

Well, to make an even longer story a little shorter, the girl has chosen to try to come back home to me. She is still a freshman at 17. I do not feel that she will graduate by any conventional means. I feel if sent to a traditional high school, she will get too wrapped up in peer pressure and negativity from other kids at school due to her age. I fear she will quit school before earning a diploma. I am looking into college scholarships for her through the state, such as the 21st Century Scholarship Program, but they require that she earn an accredited diploma from Indiana to receive the monies she deserves to continue her education. She cannot qualify for this scholarship program with a GED and I feel a GED would give her the options in life that she so richly deserves. I do not want to be the one to give up on her when all the other "parental figures" in her life have already done so at such a tender age.

That is the long and the short of the story. I am in this for the love of children that have no one else to fight for them. I would hope that legislators would also be advocates for choices

necessary to help non-traditional students who have had a rough start in life, turn into successful and productive adults. Virtual Charter Schools will fill a need for many families with complicated issues.

Sincerely,

Heather

Bunker Hill, IN

Near Grissom Air Reserve Base

I have three beautiful, well behaved children, and I would like to keep it that way. My husband and I were married for ten years before we had our first child. That gave us a unique opportunity to see what worked and what did not work when it comes to raising children. Does that mean I think we are perfect parents? No, far from it! What I do think is on some bigger issues we had some insight that other parents don't have the chance to see.

One of the first things we noticed was the changes that appeared in all of the kids once they started school. Almost every one of our friends and family members commented on the disagreeable changes in their kids. The kids learned new colorful words, they became disruptive, and almost everyone had difficulty, to some degree, with the way the curriculum was taught. By the way, I have 21 nieces and nephews, plus friends, so this was not just a couple of instances.

My husband and I quickly decided that we would do whatever we could to keep our kids from these kinds of problems. We started our oldest in a Christian school and, after 2nd grade, the school closed and we did not have many choices.

I never intended to actually home school my kids but this was our best alternative. We have home schooled for two years and I still feel lost.

I want virtual public schools so I can continue to keep my kids at home, and still give them the above average schooling that they deserve. I want it for the convenience, for the price, and for the routine.

Many people complain about Virtual Public Schools taking tax dollars meant for school buildings. I contributed to school taxes for almost 20 years, and my husband has contributed for 25 years and counting. We have never used a penny of those dollars. We, of course, have never complained about paying for other people's children using our money, I would appreciate the same courtesy, from those who wouldn't choose a Virtual Public School.

Lisa

Harrison County,

30 miles from Louisville, KY

I live in Argos, Indiana which is in Marshall County. My daughter had a traumatic birth which caused bleeding on her brain. Among other potential problems one of the things the doctors told us we would have to watch for was learning disabilities.

As a first grader she knew how to do her school work, had good reading comprehension and math skills. She just couldn't write well. They wanted to hold her back but didn't want to test her for a learning disability and get her help with her writing.

I looked into the virtual public schools and just knew that it would be the perfect option for my daughter. She could accelerate on the subjects she was good at and get help in the writing with which she struggled. We could spend more time together as a family, instilling our values in her without having to constantly battle the horrible, mean things she was hearing from older kids on the bus. Why should she have to ride a bus for 45 minutes each way every day full of older kids who were mean? She was scared to go to school and felt defeated before she even tried. A virtual education would provide her a safe environment to learn and be herself.

We were devastated when the virtual public school choice was taken away from us. What can you do when you run out of options within the public school system? The only option left is to home school. That's a difficult choice to make.

Our tax dollars pay for the public school system. We should have a choice in how that money is spent. As parents it is our responsibility to know what's best for our children. What if the traditional public school isn't what's best for our particular child? Shouldn't we have options available to us?

I firmly believe that all children should have an equal right to an excellent public education. We should have a choice in how that education is delivered to our children, whether it's in a traditional classroom, or virtually.

The children of today will be our leaders of tomorrow. We need to ensure that they are getting the best education they can.

Indiana needs to get up to speed with the technology of the 21st century. Give parents a choice!

Thanks,

Chantel

Argos, Indiana in Marshall County

I got involved in virtual charters because my oldest daughter is extremely bright and I was afraid she wouldn't be challenged when she entered public schools. I am a teacher, though I haven't taught formally for several years due to raising my family. I know how difficult it is for teachers to serve each child's needs with all that goes on in the classroom. So I just wanted to supplement her classroom experience. In the meantime (5 yrs. later) my youngest is now in school and although she has a wonderful, understanding teacher, she is having difficulty in school with some concepts. Different learning disabilities have been discussed with her teacher and I am leaning toward ADHD. We are beginning the informal process to see if that may be something we want to approach with her doctor in a more formal way.

No matter whether my girls stay in a traditional classroom or not, I think that virtual schools are an excellent choice to offer families. I remember being frustrated with teaching in the classroom due to the fact that many of my children needed nearly one to one attention and not being able to give it to them. I feel this type of program, if families commit to it, is a wonderful option. Every family should have a choice of what best fits their child. I am on board for the long haul, no matter what option I find best for my girls.

Elizabeth

Rushville, IN