

Education for our children should always be an accessible "choice"..by that statement, I mean it also should be reasonable, practical and affordable by all who choose. This also means that one choice for public school education does not fit all.

I have 3 children. They are 3 very different individuals...they have different needs. Unfortunately all must go to the same school they are "assigned to".

Two of them currently attend a school that is new to the "choice ed – traditional" list due to their failing scores.

At first I was happy with my public school assignment. Things have changed over the past few years. I do not feel that my public school adequately meets the needs of my children now.

I was excited about the opportunity of school CHOICE vouchers for the next school year. This was because sending 3 children to private schools formerly would be a financial burden. I had already chosen my school for next year. We had been there, taken admission tests, sent paper grades, completed an application. I was set to apply for the scholarships. Then things changed and our plans were derailed.

My oldest child is 9. She is considered "gifted" by her test scores. She has scored as high as 99th percentile nationally in reading, 96th in science, and 98th in math. She also has ADHD. She struggles when she's bored. She cannot do her best in the wrong environment. Last year her gifted instruction teacher left the school. They have not been replaced. Despite a large levy increase. She is no longer getting special instruction outside her classroom. Coincidentally her test scores have dropped this year. I think this is largely because she is no longer getting special gifted instruction. Although she is on a gifted plan, her instruction doesn't differ from non-gifted peers at school. It's only a piece of paper. She's bored. This is not fair to my child. Unfortunately I do not think her current school situation is now adequately meeting her needs. I would love the opportunity to send her to a school that can better address her needs to work ahead of her grade level (such as the one we had chosen). A smaller number of students there would allow her the opportunity to be treated as an individual, and to work ahead...but this is no longer an option due to the hold on traditional Ed Choice.

My middle child is 5. He is bright, funny, and kind. He struggles with reading. He currently receives title 1 services. He goes to "kinder-plus" an all day kindergarten to receive special reading instruction for half of the day. Despite this, he is struggling in his "traditional" school setting. He is still below grade level expectations even though he is receiving title 1 services and we are working hard at home. He now has behavioral issues at school – but not at home. Our pediatrician believes that he has a learning disability or ADHD. We are in the process of getting him evaluated. Unfortunately, I do not think his current school situation is adequately meeting his needs. I would love the opportunity to send him to a school that has less students because I think they could better address his needs. The private school that I chose offers a lot of tutoring help for students that are behind. He would greatly benefit. I am afraid he will fail kindergarten

now. I can't afford to send him to a different school. I feel helpless because I can't help him be his best.

My baby is 4. She is in preschool. She was adopted. She had exposure to drugs/alcohol in utero. She's bright, but struggles with items such as attention, focus, being quiet, sensory seeking, personal space, fine motor skills, mood regulation, social skills, etc. She has had developmental delays, but is currently "on target" (and that took a lot of work on our part). I worry A LOT that she will fall through the cracks and again be behind in a traditional school because she is not like everyone else. She needs to be in a school with more flexibility, patience, understanding, and of course experience with kids that have been exposed in utero. The preschool she is at offers private school instruction to the 8<sup>th</sup> grade. She is thriving there. Her teacher is well versed in kids with special needs. This would be an excellent fit, but it's just not affordable for us (realistically). It's heartbreaking knowing that I found a good fit for her, but we can't stay.

I FEEL LIKE I AM FAILING THEM.

We pay tax dollars for our children's education (and that of other children in my district). MY CHILDREN ARE INDIVIDUALS...yet they are not treated as one in our public school education system. They are just a number, a test score, an expenditure.

As you can see from above, for many reasons I feel like my assigned public school isn't a good fit for my kids.

Tax wise, there should be an allotment to pay for each pupil's education (based on their needs), NO MATTER WHAT SCHOOL WE CHOOSE...because they are an individual with different needs!

And it should not just be about money that gets dumped into the school district to divide, conquer, and get good test scores with.

We live in America. We are supposed to have so many freedoms here, but we can't choose what kind of schools our kids get (realistically).

My husband and I both work. We have a six figure salary! However, we fall in the middle "trap" where we just can't get ahead. Healthcare is so expensive and it continues to rise. We have a lot of healthcare expenses. ADHD medicine alone for one child is \$230 per month (and I have "good" insurance because I work at a hospital). Add in childcare expenses, pay taxes, living expenses, retirement, etc....Then to pay \$15,000-20,000 per year for all of our kids to go to a private schools too? Is this really doable? I am not able to save as is. I am making ends meet. Education costs would be as much as our mortgage.

It should not be a struggle for us financially or emotionally to obtain an education for our child that best fits their needs, especially when their current situation "isn't working out".

I get angry at the fact that if I were poor, it wouldn't be a struggle at all, because it would be covered with Choice Ed expansion (based on income). That is not right. It should be a choice for everyone.

I wish lawmakers would stop listening to public schools whining and complaining about not meeting the needs of my children. Please know that there are parents like me, who are deeply concerned about their children, but feel “trapped” in the public education system and cannot realistically afford another choice.

If my school district is really spending over \$9000 per year to educate each pupil (including mine), why are they complaining to spend HALF of that to educate my child somewhere else? Do the math. Why is this such a financial burden?  
Please help me, help my children.

One “choice” does not fit all.

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