

# Emma Norman - Student

Columbus, Ohio 43204

Chairman Jones, Members of the HB 9 Conference Committee.

I am here today to talk about my experience going from Valleyview Elementary, a public school, to Grove City Christian (or GCCS), my current private school. While I cannot speak for every school out there, I can account for my old and current school and what I have been shown and taught in my times there.

Yes, I cannot deny that there were some really amazing teachers that I had in public school. You could tell that they loved their students and were always willing to help someone when they needed it. Out of the six years attending public school there was only a couple of teachers that stood out. Even though I could feel that these teachers cared about me more than the others, I still felt that I was not prepared like I should have been for continuing my education. To sum it up, I do not believe that I was properly taught in Valleyview.

When I first came to Grove City Christian in 6th grade, I was far behind all of the other kids who had gone to GCCS years before me. For instance, they all knew their History. They knew their Presidents and what they accomplished, who was assassinated, and much more. In Valleyview, I didn't even have a History class. I never learned anything about the presidents of our nation or how our government worked at all. When I came to GCCS I was absolutely clueless.

The same goes with geography. The students at my current school, GCCS, knew their states and geography while I was sometimes left wondering in class if Nevada or some other place was even a state in the U.S. because I had never heard about it. I had little knowledge where our states were located either.

At Valleyview, we never learned our multiplication tables or division tables. I personally love math. Or at least that's what I thought. When I first came to GCCS, I could easily say that I hated math then. What I thought used to be easy wasn't easy anymore. Every time that I went to class, I just wanted it to be over. While everyone at GCCS knew their multiplication and division tables and were able to quickly solve them in a problem, I would get stuck and get frustrated. I was severely behind in almost all of my subjects.

Everyone else knew things that I didn't in GCCS, and I was not always able to completely understand what the teacher was talking about due to my lack of knowledge. I felt dumb and it got me discouraged. For 6 years I thought that I was smart, and that I knew everything, that school was easy, and I didn't have to work hard to even do anything while I went to Valleyview. Reality hit me hard when I changed to GCCS. Later I will talk about how these teachers helped me through this mindset to succeed.

At Valleyview, I was one of the "top students." I had good grades, was in advanced classes, in multiple clubs, lieutenant in the Safety Guard and much more. But when I switched to private

# Emma Norman - Student

Columbus, Ohio 43204

school, I felt like I was in the bottom few. As I slowly worked myself into the pattern of how GCCS worked, it got a bit easier. I had to do twice the work though and it got tiring.

Now that I am on course at GCCS and even a bit above it, I have been urged to help others who had the same problem as me when I first came. I am currently tutoring someone who just came from public school and is having the same struggles that I did. GCCS gave me confidence in my abilities and I am now able to help others just like I needed help.

It took me a long time to get into the swing of things though. At my Valleyview, we barely ever got homework and whatever homework we did get was super easy. Half of the time they never even asked to see it or grade it. When I came to GCCS, I thought it would be the exact same thing. But no, It was not that way at all.

At GCCS, the grades you got actually mattered. At Valleyview when quizzes and tests were graded even if I got quite a few wrong they still gave me a 100%, this is not so at GCCS. The grading got stricter. For homework, You were not able to give the excuse of "oh, I forgot it at home... but I did do it" anymore. They had us turn in the homework the day that it was due and they always asked for it unlike Valleyview.

Because of GCCS, I have had to learn that good work doesn't come without effort. If I want a good grade, I have to work for it. I also learned the idea of accountability. I need to be responsible and held accountable for my own actions. I could not just get by with excuses. I had to do what I was supposed to do or what I was told to do or else I would have a consequence. Whether that consequence be a zero for a grade or a detention, there would be something that would happen. That was not what happened at Valleyview.

The teachers at Grove City Christian actually care and want to see how you're doing and what you may need help with. I had multiple resources that I could go to get help. The teachers worked with me personally and would help me understand in my own learning style.

They were always open to questions and would explain when I didn't understand. It seemed like they usually always had time to help. They had free periods that we could just work one-on-one. They were always around. They would also pull me out of class and ask me what they could do to help or ask what was going on if I didn't turn in an assignment. They also held conferences with my parents asking them what they could do to help me.

There were times when all of the teachers that were teaching me, showed up at the conference to show that they had a concern for me and wanted to help in whatever way they could. At Valleyview, I remember some days where I barely even saw the teacher because they were helping other people while I was off reading a book or drawing because I was bored and had nothing to do since I already had my work all done.

# Emma Norman - Student

Columbus, Ohio 43204

The teachers at Grove City Christian want to see you improve not just because they have tests to pass, but because they honestly care about your education. They didn't just want me to be able to pass the mandated tests, they wanted me to excel at them and keep learning more. I felt at Valleyview the teachers just made sure that I could pass the mandated test, then they move on to the next student and I would be forgotten.

In the end, one of the main things I'm getting to, is that at Grove City Christian, the teachers and the school were the ones to reach out to us. At Valleyview, the teachers never reached out or talked to us. We were always the ones trying to chase them down and talking.

I cannot speak for the budget because that is way above my head. I do realize that the grading card system isn't perfect. Just because a school gets a failing grade in the system, may not mean that it is teaching the children improperly. I came here to testify that there are schools that are receiving a failing grade that I actually do believe are not properly teaching the students. The schools need to be accountable to that.

What the best way to hold them accountable is what I am interested in. My opinion is that these schools need to be graded on how they are teaching their students. If the grade card system is flawed, then something needs to be done whether there be corrections or just a whole new system. Ed Choice should not be only based on income based either. Just because a person makes more money than another, should not let schools have the ability to improperly teach their children. I want it to be a mix of both of those ideas, kind of like how the system is now. In my opinion the more students that get a better education the better.