

Good morning. My family and I have been following along with the most recent discussions about the EdChoice Scholarship program and we would like to provide some input from "the other side" of the table.

As a Christian family in ministry, we have always felt the need to provide our children with a well rounded Christian education. However, as a ministry family on the lower end of the pay scale, and having two biological children and one child who is adopted, it is impossible for us to afford Christian education tuition. We heard about the EdChoice program and applied.

This program has allowed all three of our children (now in 5th grade, 2nd grade, and kindergarten) to attend an amazing school where they are offered challenging academics as well as experiences they would not get in a public school. They are learning reading, writing, math, and all of the subject areas, but they are also given the opportunity to learn Spanish, Technology (which is vital in this digital world they are growing up in), and even a missions class where they connect via Skype with children in Guatemala. They have the opportunity to go to Guatemala and meet sponsored students in 6th grade and learn about the world around them.

Our children have thrived at this school and our only negative point about it, is that it ends at 6th grade. Beyond that, our children will need to change schools. We are faced with the next step to find a school that meets their needs. In the meantime, they are all in a school that IS meeting each one of their individual needs. Our 2nd grade daughter was very shy and has come out of her shell so much this year because she has a teacher who has invested in her, personally. She is thriving in this class. Our 5th grade son was comforted in kindergarten when separation was a big deal for him. Our kindergarten student who is adopted and has sensory needs has been able to thrive in a smaller classroom setting with structure, where she can feel safe and connected so that she can best learn. This school has truly met the needs of each child, and continues to work with us whenever concerns do arise.

The EdChoice program has been a huge blessing for our family and we would be sad to give up this school if we could no longer afford to be there. Our children are receiving a baseline Christian Education that will set them up for future success. To change schools before 6th grade would be detrimental to them and create a trauma that we are careful not to do. With so much talk about trauma and Adverse Childhood Experiences these days, we are working hard as parents NOT to allow this, and to keep their mental health in tact. Life happens and we are teaching them through tough times, no doubt. However, we will stand up for what we believe in, so that our children can receive what they need, and this school is just that.

This has been a huge help for us and many of our friends we have met through this wonderful school. I urge you to keep it going, so that ALL families have the opportunity to choose where they would like to send their children. Providing for the needs of our future leaders should never come down to money.

Feel free to contact me if you have any questions or would like clarity on any of this. I greatly appreciate your time and willingness to listen.

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