

Hello, my name is David Roeser. I have been the principal of Hametown Christian Academy for five years. Our school is a private, non-chartered, non-public Christian School. We hold classes from Kindergarten through 12th grade. We average about 60 students total per year with a high attendance percentage average. We currently operate with 17 staff members and have around 30 additional volunteers on average. This allows us to keep a student to teacher ratio of about 5 students per teacher. We have been providing a solid education for students since 1984. I use the adjective solid, because we have consistently scored around and above the 65th percentile in our state standardized testing.

I hope to take a few moments to share a personal testimony about the validity of schools such as ours. I attended Hametown Christian Academy from Kindergarten through 12th grade. I loved going there. After graduation, I attended Akron U and received my Bachelor's degree in Secondary Education with a Language Arts specialization. I assisted in teaching at Central Hower High School for a time, but quickly saw several issues. Because of the large classrooms in this public school setting, many of the students didn't receive individual attention or even have the chance to ask personal questions about the material being taught.

I unfortunately witnessed many stop trying and most of the struggling ones slowly quit altogether. Because of the educational one size fits all structure, I was largely unable tailor my lessons to be specifically targeted to those who needed it; let alone, mentor and tutor these seemingly hopeless students. It broke and continues to break my heart when what I witnessed is still continually being shown to me in the students, who often apply to Hametown. They typically come from overcrowded school situations and are desperate to get specific help.

My return to Hametown lit a fire in me that has only been kindled over the years as I've been able to personally mentor and individually focus on each of my students education. Every person here knows each other's story and name. We are small for a reason. Every student here receives the attention and guidance they deserve. It's a model that not only educates but heals and empowers. At times, we've been called a "school hospital", a testament to our nurturing and restorative environment. However you want to see it will only show one thing. We NEED alternative school choices like ours, and the financial exclusion that has been placed on parents is deeply concerning and is a complete disservice to our community's potential.

Thank you for allowing me to share my story. I firmly believe in and have time and time again witnessed the transformative power of alternative school choices and hope that our testimonies today will pave the way for a more inclusive and supportive educational landscape.