

I am Angel Stoolfire, I have been in education for over 15 years. Thank you for your patience and this opportunity to speak as this is not really in my wheelhouse. I appreciate the chance to share on the impact that this legislation will have on families and Christian schools.

The Student Services Department at Granville Christian Academy works with 85 students K-12. Of those students 35 are on IEPs and several more on 504 plans. There are only 23 currently utilizing the Jon Peterson Scholarship for services at GCA this year. As the Director of Student Services of course I walk families through the evaluation process and the steps to get services started for their child. But as a Chartered, Non-Public and a Jon Peterson provider I am also tasked with helping families understand the options they have to shoulder the financial burden of special education. I am very grateful for the Jon Peterson Scholarship and the money that it provides for families to gain services in non-public settings. GCA is pleased to offer Speech, Occupational Therapy, Intervention and Aide services within the school day, in the same capacity or more than would be received at the student's public school.

I think it makes sense to walk through the way that we utilize scholarship funds in a real-life example of one of our GCA students. For this example, let's call her Suzie. Suzie has a diagnosis of Autism. That makes for Jon Peterson Scholarship category an amount of \$32,445 a funding category 6 for those familiar with the Scholarship. I know you are thinking, that is a ton of money Angel, just take out the \$9,000 for tuition and use the rest for services and call it a day. When in actuality the breakdown of services to truly meet Suzie's needs looks more like this:

Suzie needs a part-time classroom aide – that allows her to be part of the classroom learning environment instead of being in a resource room all day. We know based on Suzie's needs for peer interaction and social norm development, the classroom is her best learning environment. We will allocate \$15,000 for her aide to work 3 to 4 hours a day to meet her needs. And yes, that is on the lower side of compensation range, but her aide does this because she loves it.

Suzie, like many with the higher category needs, will utilize the Brain Balance program or an Autism specific/ABA or developmental counselors that are an integral part of student growth. When a family chooses to utilize Jon Peterson funds for these services, which are

amazing and very needed, the family usually allocates between \$10,000 and \$15,000 of the Scholarship to these programs each year.

Let's say that we have now allocated \$25,000 of Suzie's Scholarship. Like almost every individual I have worked with on the Autism Spectrum she also needs Speech and Language services as well as Occupational Therapy services for sensory integration and executive functioning skills. GCA contracts with two third-party providers for speech and OT services because the cost of employing these therapists on our own is too high for us to take on within our budget. Most of our students receive 30 minutes of speech and 30 minutes of OT each week to meet their objectives and goals. Suzie will get an average of 2 hours with each therapist each month. GCA is charged \$125 an hour (a reminder that I went into the wrong field within education) for services provided by my therapists, which is a typical rate within the Scholarship. The allocation for these services is about \$4,500 each school year.

I haven't even mentioned intervention services yet and we have less than \$3,000 left within the Scholarship to meet Suzie's needs. One of my Intervention Specialists spent almost 6 hours working with Suzie in the month of October. Suzie and her family are definitely out of funds from the Scholarship at this point and stuck with a \$9,000 tuition bill.

I am grateful for the leadership of Granville Christian Academy and the vision and mission that say that Christian education can be for all, not just those that have the money or are on their way to ivy league schools. GCA's administration is committed to partnering with Bible believing families to raise servant leaders for Christ. We don't believe that special education needs negate a child's access to Christian education or a family's right to School Choice.

In order to bridge the gap that current legislation has created GCA has built in tuition assistance options into our budget. I know you all are familiar with budgets, but a Christian school budget is a bit smaller than you might be used to. Which makes the number that I am about to share with you even more amazing. We have given \$149,200 in tuition assistance this school year to allow families to choose Jon Peterson funds for services. Again, I am grateful to be able to be a part of a school that stands in the gap for these families in the face of discrimination. School Choice funds and Jon Peterson funds are two completely different scholarships, in essence it seems the current legislation punishes those who have learning differences simply because they have a learning difference.