

I am a mother of three high school students in Wallingford CT. At the age of 4 I sent all three of my children (including a child that my town would not accept into kindergarten because she was birth to 3 with optional defiance) to an inter district magnet school. My entire family was against this as it involved a 1 to 1 ½ hour bus trip each way and the longer school day... It was the best thing that I could have done for my daughters.

There were so many pros that they outweighed the cons by so much. My children were with the same kids and teachers from k – 8 grades. There was no waste of staff and many staff held multiple job duties. The teachers knew every student, their strengths and weaknesses and they never had a substitute that wasn't in the school everyday as a teacher or other position so that not one day of teaching was missed. These teachers don't teach to the test they teach what the kids need for the future and that is what a lot of public schools do not do. I was very surprised that the tuition to my magnet school was less than the cost per child in my hometown.

My children received an intensive music education, theatre, health, gym, the science lab and theme months that related to each subject. One of my favorite was a Circus theme where the different acts in the big tops were tested in math, science, English and social studies not only did the kids learn about them but they did them and performed their new skills at the end of the month at a family day. Reading and Writing and computer skills were one of the top priorities of their education and it shows when they entered the local high school.

I was so against sending my children to the local school system because I feel the funds are not spent where they need to be on educating to get them into college or technical school and getting jobs. They need art, music, sports and education all these make a well rounded student and to call a 20 minute music or art class of ½ a year in gym investing in their future is crazy and we are disserving our kids if we believe that. I ended up sending my girls to the local school as they had intention of going to ECA (educational center for the arts, another magnet school) and I have been disappointed at the lack of classes that my daughters need to accomplish their future goals. We have been met with classes being cut or down graded to general so that the need to make it pass/fail in order not to affect their grade point average. I dealt with a year with my oldest girls during freshman year going through a depression for almost failing English due to the fact that she was one of the best writers in the school but could not dissect certain phrases and other such things.

We need to support magnet school and support public education to come up to the level of the better magnet schools. If that means cutting cost then cut the cost in the office staffing, the carpeting of the offices, building of things that are not needed such as super large auditoriums. We need to invest in the kids by providing arts, music, sports, and do not take from teachers, books and teach classes that challenge our kids not downgraded them so that anyone can pass them. If we want our kids to achieve we need to set high goals and they will make them. We need to provide every child with an education that they can excel in. We need to stop teaching to pass a test and only teaching one way will not get them there. These kids can pass this test if we stick to making sure every child can read, write, and do math. We need to stop passing the buck and making sure the students and staff has the support to insure that we graduate students that can be productive in society. We need to stop paying for Platinum and getting lead. Make schools prove that they can provide the best education that our money can provide without the added extras.

Thank You
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