

Additional Testimony,

I would like to share with you my personal story. I come from a family where volunteering was just what you did so when my children started school it was a given that I would help out where I could.

Volunteering in various ways at my child's school was extremely rewarding, sometimes frustration and often funny and fun but what I want to share with you are the benefits that I received that I didn't expect.

Connections: For a lot of parents our only communication with our child's teacher is to talk about our child. When you volunteer in the classroom or chaperone a field trip you build a different relationship, you get to know that teacher in a different way. The same is true of building administrators and other school staff. It didn't take very long for me to stop thinking of the school as "my child's "school and start thinking of it as "our "school. That kind of buy in and comfort level is invaluable.

Advocacy: When I saw how my school operated on a day to day basis I had a better understanding of the needs and could speak about my town's education budget with some knowledge. I also felt so firmly supportive of my school that I would speak publicly at a town meeting or address my board of education.

Nonsense: My kids couldn't play me. I knew if they had a long term project they should be working on because I had seen it on the board when I was in the building. Also they knew that I had a good relationship with their teacher and that we were working together so they couldn't attempt "divide and conquer"

Community: When it became "our "school my sense of community increased considerably. I felt welcome and both supported and supportive and that is how every parent should feel about their child's school.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Marne Usher".

Marne Usher (parent)

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