

My name is Tricia Cerullo Rosen. I was born in CT and over 20 years ago I choose to settle back in CT with my then boyfriend, now husband. We have owned 3 homes in CT over our years here. I am a registered Independent, who up until the last election voted Democrat. No longer. I will no longer sit idle and watch a state I was once so proud to come from go into a death spiral. Control OUR budget, STOP spending OUR money, keep businesses in our state and help them grow, AND KEEP YOUR HANDS OFF OUR SCHOOLS.

I stand before you today to share my journey in the educational system in CT. I grew up in a City. I went to a "City" sized school and went on to become part of a sad statistic...I was pushed through the system never being diagnosed with a learning disability. I am dyslexic and ADHD. My elementary school didn't know how to "handle" me so they put a dunce cap on me and sat me directly next to the teacher facing out at my peers. That went on until I was in 4th grade. Until I refused to no longer go to school. I fought and I cried. I hated it. I hated myself for trying so hard at something with having little to no success. That school crushed me. I was just a number in a very large group, many of which had their own special needs. I do think the teacher did the best she could given the circumstances. They pushed and pushed and pushed...they pushed me all the way out the door, until I graduated in 1990. I tried my best to get through college...but I bounced around and I struggled. I was never able to shake that dunce cap from the top of my head. No matter how hard I tried, no matter how many times I told myself I wasn't dumb...that shame always remained.

So 15 years ago when our oldest was nearing Kindergarten we made a choice. We packed up and left a town we knew and loved. We moved to a smaller town. For one reason only, it's school system. Many kids do well in big (box) systems but many do not. **We saved our money and made sacrifices to ensure that our children would be given a chance at a more promising academic experience than I had. Our money. Our choice.**

We have 4 children in the Wilton Public School system. All are thriving. Our oldest child was diagnosed with ADHD. There were many struggles along the way but with closely monitored guidance, access to local services, and close personal relationships that we built over the years helped her thrive. She is now a freshman at Brown University. And my youngest, who has been diagnosed Dyslexic and ADHD has been on a long hard journey since Kindergarten. But with the smaller class sizes, more personalized relationships built between the educators and parents, he too is thriving. And because of that I am confident that in 5 years I can stand before you again and tell you, he too is thriving in college.

We made sacrifices so our children's academic stories had happy endings.

You must start listening to ALL of the people. Or you will continue to lose the ones you so desperately need.

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