

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen of the Task Force:

I would like to comment on an issue that I believe contributed to the shooting at Sandy Hook School. As you are aware, Adam Lanza was not part of the regular school system. His mother choose to remove him from school and teach him at home. According to what has been published in the media, Adam's mother had "battled" with the school system over his learning difficulties.

Under Connecticut State law, once a parent removes a student from school, the district no longer has a responsibility to educate the child. The parent then takes on the responsibility of guaranteeing the child receives an appropriate education. But, what happens to the child, when the parent fails to meet this duty? I have known children who have suffered this fate, and they reach adulthood without a high school diploma or a GED. Because these young adults can not move forward, they are stuck under their parents roof causing a situation that can become explosive. As I write this, brothers in this family are standing before a judge because of a fight last night.

We will never really know why Adam Lanza did what he did, but perhaps we might prevent similar tragedies if we pay attention to these children. At the very least, I propose that home school children be required to take standardized tests annually in reading, writing and mathematics as their counterparts in school are required to do. This would insure that these children are receiving an appropriate education and perhaps alert educators to other issues in the household.

A brief comment on home schooling:

My experience as a juvenile attorney, teacher and parent has been that parents home school for a number of reasons. The home schooling movement in this country promotes the idea that parents should make the decision on how a child receives their education. However, it is the child who is forced to live with that decision. When a parent fails to provide an adequate education for a child, it is the child who suffers the consequences.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Kathleen O'Brien
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