

My name is Najimah Roberson. I am a single parent of 3 children living in HBG city. Once upon a time my children attended HBGSD public schools. But we had too many issues from the crowded schools to the other children to the staff. It seemed like every other week I was calling for a meeting or being called in for a meeting. As a parent we tend to listen to other adults points of view never giving the children a chance to explain themselves properly. This is easy to happen with any parent especially if the conversation your getting from the school is something close to your children's behavior at home. So for me I knew my son had emotional issues but not to the extent of what I was hearing from the school. Again, I assumed it was just my son acting out and showing off in front of the other children. I learned the hard way. After changing schools trying to narrow down the issue, much time and money was spent. And I was not any closer to fixing the issues my children were having. That's when I reached out to the school district asking about SCHOOL CHOICE options. Of course I got the run around, being told it wasn't worth the time and heartache to apply for. Then I was told there is no programs that will help me get my children into better schools for them. I say better schools for them because I believe in all types of education. What I don't believe is every school fits every child. But being the mother I am I started to do my own research before I decided to move into another district like most do for a better school. What I found was the EITC and OSTC programs but even they seemed so far away, so hard to get. But I started calling different private schools in our area to see what schools participated in these programs. I also needed to find a free or cheap tutoring service because I knew my children would be behind the children in a private school. I found a local free tutoring service that also offers scholarships to certain private schools. But this program had a waiting list for funding. I was told in order to get my children pulled from this list I had to find a school on their list that has room for the grades my children were in. I was only able to get my daughter funding from this program and her private school pays the other half using EITC. My boy's grade levels were harder to find because they were older. I really wanted all my children in the same building if possible, I definitely didn't want my daughter in a school without one of her brothers. But I didn't have a choice and I was looking to make sure each one of them loved the school they attended. I was able to find my oldest son a private school that also used the EITC funding. My youngest son was the bigger problem because of the grade he was in, his disability, and the school record of suspensions which should have been removed once the school figured out my son wasn't the problem but 2 of their teachers were. So for the past school year I put my son in homeschooling. Which turned out better for us because I got to see what type of student my son was. He was also the one that another school wanted to put him back a grade instead of working with my son. The homeschooling program did exactly that. They worked with him on his level, he even had classes that were 4/5 level until he made it to his correct grade level of 5th grade. Now, today my children attend 3 different schools that fit each one of them. Two of them attend private schools and one goes to a charter school. Their grades are awesome and they love the schools they go to. The question that parents asking when their children get home from school "How was school?" I don't have to ask anymore. As soon as my children come through the door they are excited to tell me what they learned at school. As a parent my responsibilities have grown in my children's educational space for many reasons but the biggest is that these types of schools demand the parents to be more involved with the school. There is community service hours, events, fundraising etc that if you don't participate in you will pay out of pocket for not participating. Which I think this is great for me and my children because I have always been an involved parent. Now, I am fighting everyday to keep these programs open and expand them. Please help me and our children do just that! Support SB1. Thank you

Najimah Roberson