

As a current homeschooling parent who worked in the public school system for nearly 16 years, I come to you today showing my support for North Dakota's Yellowstone Virtual Academy/Tech Trep program and school choice for parents. This program helps provide homeschool parents with educational resources to create a more personalized home-based learning plan that matches their child's unique needs.

I have three older children who all graduated from the public school system. They each had bumps throughout their education, but at the time, other options were not available. The classrooms are full, behaviors are at an all time high causing distractions to those who want to learn, bullying occurs daily, mental health issues are on the rise and there is not enough support staff. During my years in public education, I witnessed a downfall in the teacher-child connections, parent-teacher connections as well as staff to staff connections. We decided last year that homeschooling our youngest was the best option for our son. Our journey of learning the different styles of homeschooling and choosing the best curriculum led us to Tech Trep.

Tech Trep helps supplement parents with expanded curriculum opportunities when it comes to the education of their children. It helps parents choose how their child is educated based on the child's individual skills, level of specific needs, religious beliefs or family preferences. What we need to realize is that no child is like another; they all learn in their own special way and in their own time. Our public school system is not set up to support each unique child and does not allow for parents or students, especially those in elementary or middle school, much choice on what or how each child will learn.

The flexibility of homeschooling curriculum as well as time scheduling is also very important to us because my husband works away from home most of the year. This allows us to be able to travel with him, allowing time for my son to learn from life experiences and for us to have more time together as a family. This program will help support the parents who want to get their kids out of a desk, which they are in for long hours each day, and it gets them out into their communities experiencing life while doing hands-on learning. As a homeschool parent, you realize that your child isn't only learning during the school year in a classroom setting, but all year round in all types of environments. And many kids, like my son, learn better in a one on one, relaxed setting with opportunities for different kinds of learning whether it's virtual or doing hands-on activities. Student success is key and in homeschool settings, it is individualized to each child's unique learning styles.

As a parent of a child who is homeschooled, I hear many critics, stating that homeschool children do not get enough socialization. My son is involved in sports in the community as well as learning co-ops and play groups. Tech Trep also hosts virtual

clubs as well as fun monthly get togethers in our communities with other homeschooled kids, which is a growing population.

When we look to the future, this program will open the doors for North Dakota to be an innovative player in the education of our children. By offering parents and students personalized resources, curriculum choices, available certified teachers as well as other learning opportunities both virtually and locally, Tech Trep helps parents to be able to provide education that fits each of their child's unique needs. I fully give my support for Yellowstone Virtual Academy/Tech Trep and parents' school choice in North Dakota.

Thank you so much for your time.