

While few gifts can truly change a person's life, our family has seen one that has: our school! Having the option to send our children to a school that best meets their educational needs, giving us the freedom to make decisions about their education and stay involved with their learning. This is a choice every parent should be able to make regardless of finances. This choice has been difficult for our family, and it has been a sacrifice; but one we are willing to take on.

Our oldest daughter has flourished in her new learning environment at Shiloh Christian School. Our daughter went to public school for kindergarten and half of first grade, but did not like her school—and did not like school period. After visiting with her public-school teacher and discussing the classroom environment, we made the decision to enroll her at Shiloh. Literally overnight, our child went from begging not to go to school to begging me to wake her up so she could get to school early.

I will never forget walking into our bedroom with tears in my eyes after putting her to bed. When my husband asked what was wrong, I told him, "Kate is begging to go to school, and she wants to go early!" I will forever be thankful that we made the decision, and for Shiloh Christian School.

Our school is more than a school; it is a family. We know our children's teachers, administrators, and the other parents and children in their classes. We value the relationships that our school has provided. The staff go above and beyond to make sure our children get what they need to succeed. For instance, our youngest child's first-grade teacher knew enough to identify her for possible dyslexia. Thanks to this early diagnosis, her teachers and counselors developed interventions to ensure she would overcome this obstacle to her learning.

Finding a school that meets your children's educational needs is worth it- and every parent needs to have the ability to make the best decisions for their children regardless of finances. We only have these amazing children for a short time in their life, and we take such satisfaction in providing them with the skills and education that they need to flourish. At our school, we know what our children are learning, and we know their teachers—just as important, they know us.

We would love for North Dakota to pass HB 1532. Allow parents to choose what education works for their children and allow those tax dollars to follow the child. This competitive marketplace for education would raise the level of service at both public and private schools. I also believe this would increase the level of parental involvement in education. A win-win!