

All Comments

1. Private/Parochial

**Your reason(s) for attending a private school in the Madison area was/were (check as many as apply to your decision):**

**Curricular comment - The school has curricular programs which don't exist in our school of residence or we were dissatisfied with curricular programs at our school of residence. If you checked this item, please identify what program(s) in the school/district influenced your choice:**

- Dissatisfied with opportunities overall
- Lack of meeting academically advanced needs.
- Spanish, piano and violin Gr. Pre-k & 1 respective
- Advanced reading
- Access to better college prep 9th/10th grades
- Talented and Gifted Program and Accelerated Math
- Online courses from multiple sources BYU, Missouri
- Religious
- Religion
- Spanish- foreign language at elementary level
- Religious curriculum & higher Quality curriculum
- Our oldest is attending La Follette now. Coming from private elm/middle school we do not feel she has been challenged (academically) as much as students are in private school. Needs more direction/encouragement
- Religious and cultural, weekly guidance class, open discussion of different religions and cultures that does not result in reverse discrimination.
- Weak middle school curriculum at MMSD; Concern over loss of TAG resources/choices; disinterested responses from teachers; lack of confidentiality, respect and sensitivity exhibited by some teachers.
- Spanish, Computer Lab(MAC), Liturgy, Pledge of Alliance, morning prayer, etc.
- Music every day, PE every day, Spanish. Also great art, science, Singapore math, Riggs reading/writing.
- Limited music (instrument) options. My some plays and loves the guitar
- We wanted a daily spiritual direction.
- Sports
- We wanted a faith-based curriculum. We wanted a higher standard of responsibility for our kids.
- Every year a new art teacher,& social worker. There was 50% or more poverty at Lowell & the principal at the time did not know how to handle it. The bad behavior of the children dominated the school environment. There different leaders in administration who were willing to make changes. We made others to help without any interest in helping us. Good ideas went to deaf ears and we gave up.
- K4, sports, computers, gym

- Its not really the curriculum, it's the expectation, the expectation in the public schools is so low that the kids sink to it, in our private school the expectation is very high and the kids rise to it. The teachers deal with problem children immediately and are not afraid to do so.
- We felt there was too much time spent on behavior management and less time on core subjects. Math program was weak and lags behind other schools. Music and writing were also weak.
- The school we chose, Wingra, is better suited for handling my child's talents and gifts. Despite some exception people within the TAG office the overall environment seemed hostile to accelerated or enriched programming.
- The communications between school--- parent was not good at our local school. Not enough parent involvement and not enough community feel.
- The Lakeview School reading/math scores in relation to other public schools was extremely poor. That indicates to us a remedial environment, or an environment where it is difficult for teachers to teach -- rather more time spend disciplining or doing remedial work --- perhaps the basics couldn't be achieved.
- Mixed age classrooms
- Needed more Special Ed for my son's reading. Some of other kids already reading well in Kindergarten (girls mostly)
- Religion acknowledge holidays such as Christmas. The school provides much more discipline and manners are important.
- Math and Science and music. The math program in MMSD is not acceptable to my standard.
- This school offers history, grammar, foreign language and a strong science studies at the elementary level. Not as strong as it could be, but a lot stronger than Madison Public elementary.
- Our school does not have teachers that are forced to teach to the lowest level as does MMSD. Our students are pushed to excel and taught at a higher level.
- Gifted programs
- Integrated classrooms and school activities. Numerous out-of-school activities (field trips). Sense of whole-school community. Alternate languages and cultures at K level.
- Combined K and 1st
- The school is for gifted and talented kids and has a very challenging curriculum. Our daughter was bored and into trouble at our school of residence.
- Blessed Sacrament has a more demanding curriculum with very high standards
- More arts and music, more rigorous curriculum. Students track by ability level and smaller environment.
- History/Geography/ piano/violin class, math, Spanish, spelling, reading and writing on the first month of kindergarten.
- Spanish, music
- The school we chose has a Roman Catholic religious education program
- I was concerned about the level of challenge and attention possible at Midvale which would have been our home school. The environment did not seem entirely good.
- Faith-based curriculum
- Multi-age classrooms
- Some spiritual teaching
- Christian Based Education
- I teach at my daughter's school. Math program is very weak. Music program also weak. Foreign language non-existent.
- Our daughter was not challenged by the curriculum at Van Hise Elementary. We had minimal help from the TAG Coordinator (minimal to non-existent).
- 5th - 8th Sports
- Good computer access, Spanish offered and very strong science program at Edgewood. Our local elementary has poor math scores.

- Basketball at elementary level. Student are held accountable for their homework and assignments.
- We wanted 3 things (1) for our son to stay with the same group of friends throughout elementary school; (2) multi-age classroom; (3) minimal "busy work."
- Theology Classes
- When we moved to Madison, our local elementary school (Leopold) had been through many population and Principal changes. The learning environment did not seem as positive as the school we chose.
- Faith and religious based education focusing on values, commitment and respect.
- We are in the Toki Middle School district and our past experience there was below acceptable.
- After talking to parents and principals, we were told that MMSD has no funding or programs for academically gifted children and that taking above-grade-level classes was not allowed. We chose a private school to keep our students academically challenged.
- The entire grade fell behind in math - parents got a letter in 3rd grade telling us all were receiving unsatisfactory grades because standards weren't met by curriculum. He still is behind in math facts from that.
- Our school provides religious education and we feel this is important.
- We feel Christian values are a vital component of an education
- There weren't any specific programs but the concerns expressed to us by friends whose children attend Sherman Middle School forced us to look elsewhere
- Ironically, both Midvale and Queen of Peace are in our neighborhood. Not happy about busing out of our neighborhood, though. We sought out an education that was faith-based.
- Didn't get help we needed for our son's ADHD
- Value based education as part of the curriculum. Less behavioral issues, more dedicated staff.
- To provide Christian values.
- Not a direct response to this - my daughter is in MMSD. The curriculum is not as involved. The students are not pushed to "master" their material.
- Not enough Science/music/art - wanted an interdisciplinary curriculum designed around kids' interests. Wanted smaller class size and multiage classrooms and to be in the same building K-8. Did not want the "middle school mini-high school" experience.
- Spanish, more art, more music, IB program in the high school, more individual teaching.
- MPS has more focus on socializing than on education. Many of the ideas run counter to our personal and religious beliefs.
- Gifted program -accelerated, individualized learning, Eagle School
- We wanted a religious-based education for our kids in the K-8 years.
- Our daughter is in need of a classroom of peers that understand her and work at a gifted level. In moving from out-of-state, Madison public schools just don't offer the challenge/curriculum needed for her to thrive academically.
- My daughters attend/attended Eagle School since Eagle does an excellent job of challenging each student at the proper level on each academic subject.
- We've chosen a school for academically advanced students to provide a fuller day leaving less time for our daughter (6th grade) to occupy with social agenda.
- Don't like the school district we are in. We live closer to McFarland and would much prefer that district if we were going to public school.
- Everyday math! Teachers don't know how to teach math. Lack of TAG support!
- We did not like the school pairing - Midvale/Lincoln.
- I prefer my child to be in a Christian environment where praying is not offensive to others and believing in Jesus Christ and his teachings is encouraged.

- Ability to pray in the classroom; Catholic/Christian education
- Spanish two times a week starting in kindergarten; up-to-date computers and classes; typing in fourth grade
- My son is very bright and was bored and not being challenged to his abilities. We also felt way too much time was spent on indoctrination of social issues instead of teaching the basics.
- Religious Education
- We wanted to add a Spanish program for our some at an early age, also piano and stringed instrument. Madison Country Day offers these.
- We are unhappy with the middle school (academic grade levels) in our school district (Toki Middle School)
- The school my child attended (Van Hise) was not a good fit for my child. It was too big. The teacher spent a lot of time dealing with kids who don't care about learning (not her fault) Bullying issues.
- We found it very difficult (sometimes impossible) for schools to adapt in ways necessary to accommodate our sons high test scores, e.g. TAG opportunities.
- In 1995 when our oldest child was to enroll in kindergarten the K teacher at Van Hise had a very bad reputation so we chose not to attend
- Actually when my son started school @ Lindbergh there was quite a few who didn't speak English in his K class and because of that English was considered the 2nd language and I was trying to get him to start learning Spanish.
- Foreign language classes at an early start
- We felt the private school has a more competitive educational environment overall (so the bar is a little higher).
- Catholic Education
- Allow transfers within MMSD. Develop a system-wide curriculum with standards. Let students be moved within the schools to the teachers who provide the higher - more full curricula. Integrate the studies - if the kids are studying Aztec culture - they should make Aztec Marks in Art, or Aztec music in Music Class. We have a student at West, we're finding completely different experiences between different teachers of the same subject.
- We did like the 213 and 415 combined classes
- Unless there was a Big Change in the National Education System, we would never choose public schools. We want our children to be able to freely express who they are. It's my belief that, most all Lifestyles and Religious (i.e. Buddhism, Wick am, Quanta, Mother Earth, etc.) Are celebrated as diverse ways of Life, except true strong Christian Beliefs. Since Courts falsely ruled in the early 70's the Separation of Church and State Argument; the public schools have fallen apart. There is no true moral foundation for the kids. There is no right or wrong and so we see the foundations decay over time. The result - shooting, gangs, special interest driven programs. I challenge you to examine what happens in private or charter schools, phonics based reading, strong math, etc. Most kids test our 1 to 2 grades above the national average and College SAT tests are in the high 90% range for kids.
- Equipment, resources and condition (Hawthorne); they didn't have computers and some textbooks - a lack of resources.
- This school offered a half day kindergarten program and has classes for each grade - they do not combine grades in classes. Offers grades Kindergarten through 8th grade so no major switches in middle school.
- Math primarily. Also reading
- Religion classes offered, learning resource center made available to students with needs.
- Curriculum is at an advanced level for all grades as a matter of course. Teaching materials are old school but extremely successful.
- The school has lower student to teacher ratios and higher standardized test scores.
- Mostly religious, but overall more challenging/higher standards
- Our son is smart. The TAG program at Van Hise was helpful, but the school's small size provided limited flexibility. Looking at the two teacher options as we contemplated 4th grade, we decided to move him to Eagle.

- TAG programming at elementary level was insufficient.
- Moral ambiguity in public school
- Spanish, Religion
- Religious education
- We found insufficient programming and support for gifted and talented children at Lake View Ele. We skipped our daughter ahead one year while she was there but it still wasn't enough.
- My child was not being challenged to read or do math concepts to their skill level. She then began to stop her skill level in both areas. Upon switching schools - entering the private she was way below level and had a lot to catch-up. In the MMSD she was in the top groups of her class.
- Prayer services or Religious ed.
- We feel our children receive a better education at their private school. Student who graduate from St. Dennis tend to find public high school very easy. Thus, St. Dennis students are ahead after graduating from 8th grade.
- Religion
- I want my children to attend a Catholic school for their first years of school. Religion class is not offered in public schools
- Our school (Stephens) lost SAGE; we did not like the student: teacher ratios that resulted. Also lack of TAG program.
- The paucity of programming for gifted/talented students led us to Eagle School. Our son was reading at the 12th grade level in Kdg., and despite his FABULOUS kid. Teacher's terrific efforts, there was simply no way the standard curriculum could keep him stimulated.
- Gifted Programming - after visit Leopold and talking with parents and staff, we did not feel comfortable that our daughter would reach her full potential in the MMSD.
- The first required reading in the public schools is "What is a Family." It goes on to tell of all the different kinds of families.. Learning the traditional family to the end of the book so as to not make it sound as acceptable or important. After all statistics show that children in traditional family homes have more structure and have less discipline problems as long as the parents are involved..
- We believe moral and religious instruction to be a fundamental element in our children's education. MMSD is precluded from including those values.
- Dissatisfied with the entire Madison Public School program. Teachers in private schools have smaller classrooms and more control in the room. The students at private schools do not set policy, there is more structure/discipline in private schools - very important.
- Religion classes: for high school, I don't like the block system at La Follette. I believe it is an educational failure. Why does Memorial, West and East have more merit award potential than La Follette? Poverty level is not different. Feeder middle schools are Sennett and Whitehorse - they are Okay so why - I believe it is the block system. Kids 14-17 are too young to do well. With my older son the subject wasn't covered as well at East and Memorial were further in the textbook come April.
- Progressive education
- Lack of adequate TAG programming/support.
- Private school has more time to teach, less time discipline, positive environment, lower student ration respect for each other and higher educational standards.
- Bible instruction, memory verses; in school piano instruction at Grade 1 and up; maximum of 20 kids/permanent (2) staff - one teacher/assistant.
- Don't care for the joining of grades. Like the religious part of curriculum. The Pledge of Allegiance is said every morning as a class.
- Religious instruction. Why during Christmas are all other "holidays" explained except Christmas?
- Our daughter is learning Spanish already in kindergarten and will be taking piano as part of the curriculum next year.

- We can't stand "No Child Left Behind" testing policies. The school my child attends has no exams and a focus on curiosity - driven learning. Hard to replicate in large public schools. However, we are strong supporters of public schools as we know most people cannot afford the school my child attends.
- Smaller classrooms and religious basis - can't even mention God in public schools anymore. Moral values are extremely important - with Eastside and ALCS we know the teachers have the same basic values as we do
- I choose a private school because I want the freedom of talking and discussing our faith and the belief in God.
- We wanted a Catholic school for our kids.
- Small class size, Spanish Curriculum from first grade to 8th grade. Concerned over decisions in the school.
- See final comments
- Faith based instruction and celebration
- Religious education. We are looking for a school where our children can talk and learn about God and about Catholic Church.
- 4 year old kindergarten - I strongly support initiating a 4-yr old kindergarten program in the MMSD and would send my younger two children if implemented!
- Curriculum/interactions with peers was not challenging.
- We chose a Montessori School - the Montessori method teaches children and uses materials that make good sense to us. It is unclear to me, what the quality of instruction and materials are in public schools.
- I want my child to learn principles and moral expected and taught at home.
- The private school provides mixed age instruction - more than a 1-2 classroom, but 1, 2, & 3 classroom with age appropriate but mixed instruction for the group. I think it provides education to the child's ability not the age or grade.
- We wanted religion included in the curriculum.
- Full time RN (medical needs); faith based-education; better curriculum; excellent reputation; less behavioral problems; more individualized attention; quality teachers; community environment and continuity with K-8 in same school.
- Talented and Gifted Program
- piano, foreign language, international curricula
- Teachers were teaching to low functioning kids and my daughter was not learning.. Counting skittles in 2nd grade !!
- 98% parent participation in school. Classrooms were organized, the children & teachers all said good morning to principal and showed respect to him & us.
- Programs, placement decision, and curricula were lacking for academically talented and gifted students. TAG was minimal when we started MMSD in 1999 and suffered continual cuts after that.
- Montessori education - would love to have this option within public school system. We moved to Madison because of Madison Contial Montessori.
- Religion Courses - There is one true living God
- Lack of foreign language at early age, Lack of music lessons a theory at an early age, Singapore math, IB program
- Montessori has a specific style of teaching that we believe in. Madison Country Day will provide foreign language, music lessons
- Phonics based reading program, multisensory approach to learning/teaching support in areas of learning difficulties so other subjects could still be learned. Non-disruptive environment with more rigorous academics.
- We believe in "God" belongs in our life. In our government and in our Pledge of Allegiant. Also standing to face the flag and give honor to our country daily.
- Character and religious education classes
- We had our daughter at Leopold for KG. She has some learning delays but not severe enough to be eligible for special assistance. She is at Blessed Sacrament and they do a phenomenal job with giving her the extra attention she needs.

- Montessori Education - Multisensorial learning, freedom to move while learning, not stuck behind desks.
- Montessori method allows my children to work at the level
- You teach kids whole language instead of phonics. Phonics works better, why wouldn't you use it? You are the guinea pigs of the school of Education at UW.
- Catholic education is a bonus but not a requirement or deal breaker
- TAG

**Your reason(s) for attending a private school in the Madison area was/were (check as many as apply to your decision):**

**Other Comments - Other: (Please identify the other reason(s) below.)**

- The teachers care about the children
- The lack of focus on academics at MMSD
- I prefer K-8 rather than middle school
- Respect, grading, few neg. influences, grading
- Teaching styles
- Progressive teaching philosophy, art + music
- Too many serious discipline issues
- programming for children who are 2E (TAG+LD)
- Teacher have to dumb down the curr. can't teach to
- Exposure to age inappropriate material by school
- Teacher to student ratio in K-1--1 to 9.5
- High stress level at Leopold with teachers yelling
- Quality of curriculum provided to students
- cheaper than public school after school cost
- Over population/crowding at local school (Leopold)
- Concern about bullying also. There are 28 kids in my child's current class is happily manageable vs. MMSD's Sage classes of 15-17 Kids?!?
- Student's nice/safety
- Also, the means of getting our child to school wasn't safe enough for me
- Daughter was born Sept. 21, we had her tested by MMSD for early enrollment. She was denied, yet we felt she was ready for kindergarten. Now in first grade, she's doing great!
- The range between kids seemed too wide. Some kids were grasp instruction while others still needed help. By the time they understood the project and was just getting started the other kids were finished.
- Morals, ethics and religious education are important to us.
- Suspensions, expulsion, violence in general. Observations of police cars outside Blackhawk frequently, arson, etc.
- Too many children with behavior problems which cheats the regular average children out of an adequate education.
- Bussing. We are in Midvale/Lincoln District
- The Madison schools have very many safety issues that aren't being addressed and it is a concern.
- Very much concerned about safety, drugs and negative peer pressure.
- Playground did not have enough supervision. Kids went hungry to school and would eat during class and disrupt the class. Bad behavior had to be accepted by the teacher or ignored so others kids could be taught. Expectations were low and mediocre behavior got praise.

- The reputation of the school in our area is poor and I worry about the safety of my child.
- Smaller class size, non-English speaking families not a concern.
- Also like the fact that the school is K-8. The Madison middle schools do not have the same reputation.
- I was very dissatisfied by the lower standards of the public schools, the amount of behavioral problems that are tolerated, and the teachers who are afraid to discipline the students who need it.
- Out-of-control students even at the kindergarten level. Lack of respect from student-to-student and teacher to student.
- Having all our kids go to the same grade school rather than being split into two schools in 3rd grade (now we have 1st/3rd graders) our current school is closer to being a neighborhood school to us.
- Dislike the multi-age program at Sennett Middle School.
- To provide our children with a good Foundation of Respect, discipline and morals that appear to be lacking in public schools.
- Discipline permitted on a regular basis.
- There is more of a one-on-one in a private school. In the 1st grade class there is only nine students..
- Team sports were available, beginning 5th grade and lasting through 8th grade. Leopold did not seem well-administered at the time we were choosing a grade school- 2000.
- Poor teacher and a chaotic classroom in 1st grade (Franklin 2002-2003); then the teacher decided to move up and teach the same kids, including some in 2nd grade. We needed to get our son to a better learning environment. More order, not 90% of energy spent on 1-2 kids that weren't ready for school at any grade level.
- Concern: more with the environment created to address these issues than the issues themselves, e.g. parents excluded from the building, kids being told they couldn't use the bathroom, etc..) Although there were many supportive teachers and staff, there were also a sufficient number that created a hostile environment (moving kids arbitrarily, referring to certain groups of kids as "slippery" or otherwise questionable it caused my daughter to lose faith in the system.
- Location of school want my child to walk to school.
- We were living overseas for 8 months of the year for the last 5 years, so we wanted a smaller school for the kids to come back into for the last 2 months of every school year.
- Concern is at upper levels not primary school.
- Superior standardized test scores at our school of choice versus MMSD. Superior post elementary and post high school performance of graduates of our school of choice versus MMSD.
- Two children in grades - 3 years apart can be in same school at once.
- Negative peer pressure - ego problem with my son for delayed reading. He's not in other areas but his reading skills he would find the other areas challenging now in 2nd grade.
- The children are pushed academically and provides the tools to be good students and motivated to learn.
- She had choice between West & Edgewood. In 8th grade my daughter came over to West for one class. Did not like environment. Loved her class...hated large school.
- Too much tolerances of disrespectful, violent learning environments made this choice necessary. Provides moral guidance.
- Leopold - too big, over crowded; Eagle 1-2 classes per grade only 14 kids per class
- While researching schools we were told on multiple occasions that we could not observe classes or meet with teachers to discuss curriculum. We were only allowed to attend the "open house" and this would be the only option for use to experience the school. We also felt that we were treated very poorly when we were inquiring about the school.
- Public schools cannot handle all the society issues which makes for disruptive behavior in the classroom, which would reduce what our children could learn. The forcing of inappropriate life style choices onto children is a concern also for us.
- Double standard for treatment/discipline for my child vs. Allied Drive kids.
- Lack of dress code



- At the time of our decision of where to send them to school, (prior to their kindergarten year) there was no neighborhood school.
- Two page letter attached.
- Public school staff were unresponsive, uncooperative and somewhat arrogant. Our child took a kindergarten placement test. We were told we could not see the results of the test and could not speak with the person who had administered the test. This is just one example.
- Lack of responsiveness to parental concerns and to parent communications (hard to get a phone or email answered, phones ring off hook, messages not returned) Discriminatory treatment of Black boys. Disrespectful approach toward parents ("parenting classes," etc.) instead of asking our opinions.
- Better discipline, higher expectations; teachers promptly communicate any learning problems, the children are not at risk of forcible bussing across town.
- Kid and parents felt like it would prepare her better for college. Parents liked the idea of a continued (from Catholic school) Community/Family feel
- Respect for teachers and others, no gangs, safer environment.
- The schools (unpublished) extensive history of grads with outstanding academic achievement; small classes; differentiation of curriculum based as achievement (or lack).
- They let her skip a grade. She was the youngest in her class for awhile, which she liked.
- St. Dennis offered 1/2 day kindergarten
- Principal, Linda Sweeney was difficult to work with.
- Stronger education standards to help children excel above state standards.
- Smaller school setting - teachers know individual children better.
- My daughter was 7 days too young to start kindergarten in MMSD, she was already reading and had attended two years of pre-school. Counselor at (MMSD school) failed her early entrance exam - appealed, denied, appealed again - new counselor re-tested (kind of) failed again.
- I wanted to send my child to a school where parents tend to be more involved - and in my opinion a much better environment for my child.
- Concerned about safety and with the disciplinary problems and ESL challenges -- true education - beyond teaching to the lowest common denominator is secondary.
- Wanted to avoid larger middle school - Cherokee with lots of bad peer pressure.
- Performance of children on standardized tests
- Wanted our children to receive a high quality and challenging education in a well disciplined environment. Didn't want them to be "held back" because the teachers had to deal with discipline issues or teach "down" to the class because of slower students. Wanted a loving environment where hugs can be given and received without being called "sexual harassment."
- My child did not feel challenged at Franklin School
- Concern about a disruptive classroom environment that leads to an unproductive learning experience.
- The principal, school secretary and teachers all met with us and answered our particular questions about our children's education, at the school we chose this was during the process of visiting the school - as an individual family - and being given a tour and basic intro to curriculum.
- Our child needed a classroom change. We had asked several times and it was not "allowed." His teacher did not have enough experience/resources to "deal" with all of the high needs children in the room. There were inconsistent expectations of the children in the classroom.
- When we visited (MMSD school), we were not impressed by the principal or their connection to students. Also, we had heard mixed reviews of the environment and quality of education.

- Quality of education; personalized attention to student/family.
- For one of our children, we felt he would receive the extra help and structure provided for a child LD (ADD)
- Actually all neighborhood friends go to the public schools. We liked the small town/community feel at St. Dennis with only one classroom per grade level "everyone knows everyone." We also like the multiple opportunities for field trips, unique fundraisers that would NEVER be allowed in a public school. We love that they can have Christmas parties, birthday parties and celebrate holidays that are important in our faith that would not have happened in a public school.
- More personalized instruction
- At my daughter's school, she uses Singapore math; has music theory, piano, general music and choir each once a week. Spanish 5 days a week, 35 minutes each day.
- Our children attend a Catholic school and our primary reason for sending them is the reinforcement at school of the beliefs we, as parents, instill at home.
- When our daughter began K, there was a lot of uncertainty regarding whether Emerson would remain open - discussion of consolidation of Emerson/Lapham/Lowell. Also, when I toured Emerson during K registration the K classroom they showed me was filthy and disorganized. Some chaos can indicate creative learning - this wasn't creative chaos.
- Higher expectations are expected of my children.
- Our public school teacher told us that our child was not there to learn in his kindergarten
- Concern about environment of Midvale & Cherokee, forced busing, forced integration
- We just wanted a faith based curriculum. We wanted our children to be able to say prayer, mention God, etc. We have a school that gives great education plus spirituality that is the best of both worlds.
- Importance of moral instruction, celebrating holidays and discipline children in the school - these are all lacking in public school.
- We live in a paired school district. We liked having all of our children in the same school at the same time.
- Teachers were excellent but unable to teach with constant interruptions and distractions from several kids with behavior issues and surely autistic child pulling hair in class. Could not learn be distractions and falling thru cracks because relatively well-behaved.
- With only an F-1 visa, my tutee cannot attend public schools.
- Family attended this school and one grandparent worked there.
- We were also not happy that by the time our child is in high school, she is on her 4th school. (1) Midvale, (2) Lincoln, (3) Hamilton, (4) West. We prefer either a K-6 or K-8 arrangement. We should be able to attend our neighborhood school longer than 3 years.
- Level of academic excellence at High Point Christian School. Christ centered education; nurturing environment with teachers who pray for this students. Want to be able to say "Merry Christmas" and/or Happy Easter without fear of protest.
- Son was identified as profoundly gifted, so we chose EAGLE school for a gifted and talented to better meet his needs.
- This school teaches to "the middle." It is a great place for average/above average kids. They reinforce good study habits. There are many less distractions than in the public school.
- We also strongly felt our children were not being academically challenged, were not being prepared for school beyond elementary and we were not pleased with the principals.
- Our decision was specific to Queen of Peace School.
- Too much instructional time is spent on standardized tests and preparation for those tests.
- Half day kindergarten for my 2nd child as she was quite young entering school. Upon trial of the school we determined it was a better fit for all three of our children We were very happy at Leopold in K and 1st grade. Loved the teachers and principal. 2nd & 3rd grade for oldest we had less than great experience. Poor principal, poor teachers and son was being bullied in the after school program (not MMSD program) but at the school. Teachers yelled at the kids almost every time I

stopped in the building. In comparing the sarcastic exchanges and burned out attitudes of the Leopold staff to the staff at our daughter's school, it was obvious to move my son as well. the teachers aren't paid well at our school, most teach because they love it, not for retirement and other benefits.

- My wife had concerns that our children wouldn't get as good of an academic education. In particular, she was concerned that teaching wouldn't be tailored to the individual needs of the kids and their individual ways of learning.
- I was concerned with over-crowding at Leopold
- Wanted a school in our neighborhood.
- Quality of teachers and administrators. Ability to talk to teachers whenever I wish. Communication and willingness to communicate about my child's education. Son attended Franklin & Randall and forbid me to send my sister there.
- Discipline within the school setting (dress code, closed campus, respect for faculty, etc...) and lack of a values based/faith based environment, too PC, teacher's union.
- Our child's learning style is best accommodated at his school. The class size is capped at 14 students.
- At the time, Queen of Peace had half-day kindergarten which we really wanted. QP still offers 1/2 day but now also offers full day.
- I felt my daughter was denied transfer to Kennedy due to race. Kennedy is closer to my home than Schenk.
- The school offered small classes and an emphasis on ARTS
- I really love the personal attention the teachers give!
- I also attended St. Dennis many years ago, my wife also went to Catholic School. We also like the strong discipline at this school.
- Gangs at West
- Wanted a smaller school environment
- Low test scores at Falk Ele. would negatively impact my own child's performance. I don't feel like sacrificing the quality of my child's educational environment for the "benefit" of others.
- Availability of half-day kindergarten, smaller student body, mixed-age classrooms, less chaotic environment.
- We felt it was extremely over crowded. The staff had a negative attitude.
- The ability for teachers to provide discipline (non-physical of course). General supportive emotional and educational environment.
- We felt strongly that it would be wonderful if our children could stay in the same educational environment from kindergarten thru 8th grade!
- Emphasis in the classroom weighed more on discipline than instruction.
- To allow my child to develop a sense of community at school - smaller class size, K-8 at one school, everybody knows everybody else...
- Smaller school and only one class per grade level
- Hearsay of too much of teacher's politics entering into instruction
- The way the students are allowed to dress in public schools is concerning me.
- Concern over the learning environment of which includes safety, bullying, untreated students with mental illness and other such intrusions (distracters) to an intended learning environment. My child couldn't learn much under these conditions.
- Greater accountability of how tax dollar are spent; no union teachers; fewer administrators; greater sense of family atmosphere among parents and students.
- More likely to have parents who care, and are engaged, since they have to make a conscious financial decision to send their children there. Also, it is easier for the faculty to engage children and parents, since there are less politics and less management by committee.
- Later start time in the a.m.; kids could be together (same school)

- We requested a transfer from Leopold to Thoreau, but our request was denied, which made our decision easier.
- My child would have gone to Frank Allis. My husband and I desired a smaller school setting with a strong sense of community.
- I took a position at a private school and my son came with me out of convenience.
- My daughter was bullied so badly at Hawthorne that she refused to get out from underneath her bed in 2nd grade. We had no other choice. (Staff) did next to nothing to solve the problem.
- My child did not feel safe; education was thrown off by the fact that there were so many kids who didn't care to learn.
- We tried public schools-the teachers seemed to spend more time with behavioral issues than teaching students, therefore did not really know students that do not have issues.
- We attend Lakeside Lutheran 40+ miles away. Memorial is 5 minutes from our house. Didn't even think about it.
- When my daughter attended (MMSD school) the principal at that time didn't run the school in a safe manner.
- See above
- The chance to make more friends of similar interests/backgrounds.
- My son is a follower and we were concerned about what he was being exposed to.
- There is order and accountability in private schools!
- To meet the learning style of my children, a more "traditional" approach to curriculum is desired; i.e. build on one's learning "brick -by-brick" -- MMSD, particularly in math tends to "jump" around the subject matter, allowing little time for practice and mastery. This approach is not effective w/regard to my younger children.
- Don't agree with the agenda and curriculum of the Madison Public Schools.
- The MMSD has to try so hard to please everyone that the kids miss out by not being able to celebrate Halloween or talk about and celebrate Christmas/Hanukah or anything that might not be "politically correct."
- The move was prompted by the last minute re-districting that occurred last year. It left us with no acceptable middle school option so we moved both our kids to private school.
- We have a child who would have been "special ed" in public school. Not here - one of the group, graded on his abilities. Personal attention to each child.
- Provide my child with a very positive/motivating environment and school culture that would focus on academics and behavior/personal character building. It is smaller and the kids are respectful of each other and the teachers/adults.
- Not interested in frequent school changes with busing at 2nd grade, desire to attend a neighborhood school.
- With smaller classes each child receives more attention and help if needed.
- Madison Public Schools are shooting for "middle ground" as far as academics and morality are concerned.
- The private school offered accelerating curriculum in addition to small class sizes (14 students per class)
- Would have bused across town to attend Lincoln. It is ridiculous to bus across town for school AND after-school clubs when trying to live and educate about environmental concerns? My kids now walk. If went to public school would drive past school w/in walking distance for 3 years!
- Teachers in institutional settings are likely overworked. Therefore, the personal attention is frequently lacking. Also, the leverage to weed-out sub-par teachers is often not there.
- Parent attended the school as well
- Interested sending kids to school that offers academic rigor and opportunity for high achievement. We don't believe those opportunities exist in MMSD schools.
- Poor quality of teachers - teachers she had, two had mental health issues and the Teachers Union were protecting their positions. I asked the principal and she told me her hands were tied. "It is a Union Issue" I was told.
- School teaches social justice, doesn't fall under "no-child-left-behind-act" more recess before lunch, conflict resolution, etc. seem to work well for children

- Better facilities.
- Was not pleased with our school in our district (Glendale). Tried to transfer to Kennedy where brother attends but was denied.
- I teach at Wingra School. I really want my daughter to share the school experience with me.
- We don't agree with your curriculum decisions and your tolerance acceptance levels.
- Same school K-4 through 8th grade
- None of the above. I don't want my children bussed across town/gas prices are high/taxes are high why hasn't this gone away/back to local schools?
- Teachers are unable to effectively discipline kids when they are out of line due to the fear of retaliation from the parent or student. The students get more rights than those in authority. There are so many disruptions in class that the opportunity to learn suffers. Safety Issues: how often are there fights, rapes and cops controlling unsafe situation in a place we should feel our kids are safe? Hold parents accountable for their children's action.
- 2nd sibling (4 yrs younger) born 4 mos. Premature - we believe parochial school had better "family units" not in pretentious way, but more likely 2 parent families involved in child rearing. Life is way too stressful to raise kids along - better in "community/supportive" nature.
- Our few limited experiences/exposure to Madison schools is its lack structure and discipline. It appears that the students lack respect for teachers/each other.
- Lack of "teaching peace." Teaching social behaviors, not allowing bullying plus teaching kids how to negotiate problems, make good choice. Our son has a mild autism spectrum disorder but we only recently discovered that.
- I think the K-8 atmosphere is far more healthy than homogeneous elementary and middle schools. The older kids are responsible for younger and the younger kids really admire and look up to the older kids. St. Dennis is like a second family, a great network. I know I can request help and they will step up to help.
- Reduce class size - every problem at Van Hise could be improved by reducing class size. I do not want my son in kindergarten next year to be in a class with one teacher and up to 24 students. In regard to security, I was shocked that the school allowed people to wander through the hallways without checking in first at the office.
- Knew we couldn't send son to Toki after experiencing it. Daughter attended Toki in 2005/08
- We asked (child's name) if he wanted to go to school with the neighbor kids next year, he chose Our Redeemer. My son is very social. I hear of the lack of discipline in the schools and children thrive with structure. I did not want him distracted by others' behavior with a "helpless" teacher.
- The secular progressive agenda was over-whelming. Teachers had too much difficulty handling problem children. It took away from my "normal" child. My second grader was starting to deal with aggressive kids. There is not enough supervision for the kids. The front doors of the school aren't even locked??? I saw small kids wandering the halls all the time. Discipline and structure were non-existent.
- School district is too liberal. Worried about sexual teachings too early.
- Our child was reading in pre-school. We went to Leopold before kindergarten and asked what programs or processes existed to help/challenge our daughter. We asked this question a number of times and the discussion always moved back to programs for under-performing or other needs children. Also, Eagle is simply a great school.
- The elementary school was overcrowded and many bullies and mean kids were bussed into this school. The staff had little interest in helping when my child was bullied. My child was relieved to go to a different school.
- We wanted a neighborhood school where the kids would be in the same location for their primary years.
- More homework for kids to do .
- My child asked to leave Lowell
- The public school had three principals in four years and one year alone 17 new staff members.

- Safety, smaller school size, no busing
- Far too liberal (conservatives feel persecuted).
- Overcrowded conditions in the MMSD school
- (Staff) was not a relationship builder. She responded poorly to my concerns and didn't function as a principal. My daughter was told to stop talking about creation so she wouldn't offend anyone - keep in mind she was 7.
- Assigned (after IEP) to a non-handicap accessible school - Midvale Elementary. Yes, there was elevator, but is a freight elevator.
- The challenges that the teachers at our local MMSD elementary faced with discipline & student control.
- The "secular" world view that the Madison School teaches is in direct opposition to the Christian world view we hold to. Christians are not allowed to express their beliefs without ridicule from teachers, staff & peers. All public schools are government
- We have noticed that the quality of the education of private schools is higher than of public schools
- An incredible, academically challenging curriculum and environment where teachers and administration truly care about student success.
- Frustrated that child's teacher had frequent absences from school. (some of which may have been due to school district requirements for classes or meetings.) This does not create an environment for optimum learning for students.
- A positive, instructive and disciplined environment is very important for children to learn and grow to productive adults.
- No bussing, we can walk to school. We can celebrate holidays like Christmas and Halloween. My 3 children are each 3 years apart and they would NEVER be at the same school This was a big issue.
- the close social environment in which children can be taught to co-exist, communicate, and no bullying.
- Teachers (care or interest as well as ability to focus on teaching rather than managing classroom problems and issues) I don't feel teachers are bad. I simply believe that they are forced to focus on more issues than teaching and as a result become "numb" to the children who want to learn.
- A girl got raped at West High a few years ago. (Superintendent) said "that's not the first time and it won't be the last". And when teachers molest children, the union protects them and they get moved around instead of fired.

**Were there specific things you were dissatisfied within the Madison Metropolitan School District which caused you to attend a private school? If yes, please identify the specifics below:**

**Specific comment**

- Private schools teach children to respect others.
- Teachers had too many demands from special needs
- Denial about violence. Lack of TAG education.
- Overcrowded school and classes, centralized, far
- Insufficient TAG program
- Too many behavior problems & low academic standard
- Too liberal & 5 year old exposed to "bad" behavior
- Safety in middle school and high school
- Constant budget cuts, early release, safety, drugs
- I need more room
- West administration, size, campus, academic rigor
- Integrated classroom (SED/ESL) was distracting

- Fear that art and music will be 1st cut in budget
- Violence against our child wasn't dealt with well!
- No support for Talented and Gifted Or Accelerated
- Lack of TAG, and not impressed with special ed
- Cutting of tag classes at East were planned
- Antibullying claims untrue, son was harassed daily
- Math and spelling
- More attention given to problem children
- Lack of moral compass; Lowest common denominator
- Teacher to student ratio
- No solution to overcrowding at Leopold
- Quality of curriculum, and school districting
- Not Safe & bussing requirement
- MMSD After school is overly expensive
- Attitude between teachers and students
- Over population/crowding at Leopold
- Non-disclosure of level of Special Ed Integration. Mentors ended up reprimanded harsher than others - disappointed from other kindergartens.
- Middle school -- lack of challenging curriculum. Experiences sibling had at Madison East
- I didn't hear positive feedback from parents who attended the elementary school we are assigned to. Also, the 'grades' given to Madison Schools (public) was a concern.
- Too rigid about early enrollment. Not crazy about Emerson test scores, etc. But we have heard good things about principal.
- Our children are well-behaved and did their work. They received very little time/attention from their teachers.
- Mediocrity accepted (academics). I think my son was bored. Frequent reports at parent/teacher conferences that my son is bright and not working up to his potential. Unwillingness by his 5th grade teacher to raise the bar for him, etc.
- The amount of time a teacher spends on discipline vs. Instruction time. Private school has more latitude when dealing w/ disciplinary problems. Teacher to child ratio.
- Bussing.
- As a MMSD teacher, I see too many kids who need one-on-one and the other kids lose out.
- Memorial High School having a shut down!
- The kids are getting a better education
- Bad administration, no creative, practical problem solving for bad behavior. Teachers were good but they need more back-up. Chaotic, anxious environment is not conducive to learning.
- Does not apply
- I don't want my kids in a school that needs the police to come everyday. I would not want to be in an office that needed the police everyday for my co-workers. Why should children who want to learn be in that environment - safety is a top priority.
- School curriculum; religious education.
- Combined age level classes were confusing for the student and teacher. Adding this to the ESL population and special needs students stressed the class, teacher and learning environment. There was just so much time and resources spent on behavior, social issues and special needs that basic core subjects suffered. Also, we felt that with a diverse population with many cultures there should have been some tolerance for diversity. But there was more an atmosphere of culture neutrality. I would be more than happy to discuss this further. School lunch time as also an issue. Students went to lunch with coats

on and were expected to eat in 15 minutes. Hot lunch was terribly unhealthy and unappetizing. Reduced and free meals especially should be "good" for our kids.

- The Midvale/Lincoln School district bussing
- Whether it was grade or high school, I wanted my child to be around other children that value education with parent support. You only have one chance to get it right. While not politically correct, I am concerned about "no child left behind" dilute the quality of education.
- My husband was more sure of sending our kids to QP for both religious and location reasons. I would have voted for public school if we were in an area where our kids wouldn't be bused to a different school in 3rd grade.
- Schools at the middle school age are much too large. The staff cannot handle the challenges.
- At the time of our walk-thru, 10 years ago, Aldo-Leopold was very loud, unstructured and almost wild as we observed kids and teachers in the classroom.
- Academic performance of public vs. Private school students. Historically the private school achieves more at a less cost per child.
- We believe in God, and didn't want our kids growing up believing you cannot serve God whenever, wherever. We want them to pray when she wanted to.
- Not enforcing the students to respect their home country's flag by allowing apathy and disrespect during the time of reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.
- School Board seemed to have a political agenda, which did not always place the interests of children in the forefront. (Superintendent) did not seem to listen well; he seemed to seek fulfillment of his own priorities.
- Principal was understanding but she had no real ability to remove a veteran teacher who needed to retire 5 years earlier.
- It is difficult to identify a single cause, but the primary reason was that my daughter was not happy, nor was she learning. A change in environment to Wingra had her happy and longing to attend school even on weekends and holidays. This unhealthy environment at MMSD I attribute to the fact that she felt different because of her love of academics and beliefs in social justice.
- Mentioned above. While I understand reasons for bussing -- I think it negatively affects community at school. Also curriculum not as strong as at our current private school
- We looked at Crestwood at the time our 1st born was attending 1st grade. Did not like the combining of two grade levels and no language was offered.
- Inability or difficulty to transfer to a different MMSD school outside our home attendance area (i.e. Sherman Middle School); too much energy and money expended towards "At risk" children and "Honors" programs, which leaves little resources for the majority of average students; too much emphasis on public image and political correctness.
- We are in Midvale/Lincoln area. Do not want kids bussed.
- Class size too big. Also didn't like the 2 teachers/one huge class concept he had in kindergarten at Shorewood.
- Children roaming the halls. Seemed like they could come and go without asking permission. Did not see respect being acted out.
- Bomb Scares, Drugs and Gangs. All these were present when my son attended West.
- The co-teaching environment lended itself to an unsafe atmosphere for this child, not just because of students, but one of the teachers as well. Also too much wasted time, at the expense of learning.
- Violence and need for police to monitor school.
- Too many disruptive forces in the classroom @ MMSD. Too difficult to learn because behavior issues take precedence over teaching/learning.
- Other students disruptive, behind, distracting the entire class; classes unable to enrich my child



- My child was left on his own while lower level kids got time with teacher. Political views were imposed on my 1st and 2nd grader.
- Environment, safety, drugs or negative peer pressure and to provide religious instruction.
- Amount of fights in middle school, reports of violence at high school
- We are unhappy with the middle school -- redistricting our children to Toki - we do not feel this is in the best interest of our children in the future years.
- Few blocks from Hoyt School - not used as a school. Then family moved to Indonesia for 3 years - then moved to Saudi Arabia for 3-1/2 yrs. Returned to US in 2001. Moved close to West - went to orientation session - then a sexual assault at West. We opted out of the public school system
- See above, also, I felt expectations were generally low and children are perceived for what they lack rather than what they bring to the community. My children in private school are thriving - see as unique individuals.
- Unsafe stairways and hallways, students talking to others while teacher is trying to teach, teacher with "Wall of Shame" showing bad tests and papers.
- We knew that there were some teachers at Randall that would be able to challenge her, but we didn't know if she'd get them. We also wanted to avoid Velma Hamilton, where her sister lost all interest in school and was bored to despair.
- Because of the way they're dressed you can't tell the difference between the teachers and the students.
- Low expectations for the students in both academics and behavior. Students seemed to be allowed to be disrespectful to peers and adults.
- Math streaming was over done; lack of consequences for ill-behavior and lack of parental involvement.
- See above. I will never send my child to a Madison school.
- Entered in kindergarten - just have friends with children in public school system
- Have not used MMSD except West HS. Chose Eagle close to child's needs for more gifted teaching/challenges.
- The above checked. Also, many graduates from St. Dennis are honor roll/high honor roll students in high school.
- My daughters safety and well-being both emotionally and physically.
- In MMSD children don't learn how to read until they go to the 2nd grade and some times later.
- Homeroom teacher was not qualified
- No financial accountability to the tax payers; lack of student civility in public school environment; parents have a 'gagger' voice in private schools; the amount and degree of violence; gangs.
- The MMSD policy that does not allow for the mention or display of any symbols related to religious holidays is extreme.
- At Shorewood Elementary, we did not get answers to our specific questions, either on registration day or when we called on the phone. We filled out a form requesting information and received no answer from Shorewood. We felt undervalued as parents and worried that our children would receive inadequate attention.
- Never attended
- I believe in neighborhood schools and I feel that the MMSD is run by politics and the teacher's union as opposed to common sense and the well-being of the children.
- Disciplinary Issues. Lack of attention paid to all children. Too much time focused on those with behavior issues.
- Concern about safety, drugs, peer pressure
- He was bullied and cried for an hour after school everyday. He stopped reading and drawing. We were told he should be medicated for ADHERE when we have been told that he does not have ADHD by several professionals. After this year we have learned that he has Sensory Processing Disorder. The MMSD was too quick to "diagnose" and medicate to make their lives easier.
- School climate - language and behavior in halls/playground.
- When we visited the school, we observed a lack of respect for teachers by students.

- We felt the private school would provide a more stable environment with better academics.
- Disciplinary Issues.
- Liberal Gay-Lesbian agendas. Bullying, lack of academic rigor.
- Poor reputation
- Health ed - not in conformity with our beliefs and values.
- Saying Happy Birthday or Merry Christmas are "banned" from classrooms! So many classes (8) per grade level at a small neighborhood school seems like way to many for us.
- Children without special needs or disciplinary issues were being left aside, causing them to act up in order to get attention.
- Bussing the students into a low-income school area.
- Does not apply
- Father of children preferred Madison Public Schools - in fact he moved to Madison partially for the schools.
- Does not apply
- Large numbers of children.
- Curricular, especially math and music..
- Can not specifically say, but we are not always pleased with the decisions that the school board makes. More money does not mean a better education. The teacher's union should realize this as well
- Lack of TAG programming.
- Busing children across town, waiting for the bus in the dark during winter hours.
- Mainly the state of the K classroom we viewed. Our primary reason was religion.
- There is little respect for teachers in the public school when my son was there. Some teachers allowed the students to behave in such a way as to undermine learning. Also, it seemed only the lowest achieving students was the focus of each classroom. My son was BORED not to mention influenced negatively (bad language, bullying) at a young INNOCENT age.
- Lack of gifted/talented programming. Large class size in lower grades.
- Policy of shaking up groups of kids in class every year; (2) seemed there was a lot of busy work.
- We felt there was poor classroom management and many behavior concerns of other students. Our son reported that his teachers paid little/no attention to him, as he was usually doing what he was supposed to be doing and many other children required the teachers attention because of negative behaviors.
- Midvale is our neighborhood school. We will not send our child to a neighborhood school for 3 years and have her forced to transfer (on a bus) to finish out her elementary years at a South-side Madison School
- When we moved to Madison, our local elementary school (Leopold) had been through many population and principal changes. The learning environment did not seem as positive as the school we chose.
- Living in Westmoreland neighborhood and having to ride the bus 30 minutes each way. Recent article in Wisc. St. Journal about importance of outdoor time for kids, yet we require them to ride the bus for an hour a day!
- Lack of discipline and accountability
- Yes, unruly and disrespectful children who lack respect for authority and concern for the well-being of others; no stop to filthy language, rudeness and lack of moral guidance.
- We do not care for paired schools.
- After talking to parents and principals, we were told that MMSD has no funding or programs for academically gifted children and that taking above-grade-level classes was not allowed. We chose a private school to keep our students academically challenged.
- Constant distractions from teaching due to serious behavior issues during class. At the private school, few interruptions and distractions and my son is doing much, much better in school and loves to learn.
- Although we are not happy with some issues related to gang activity/violence.

- I live three blocks from Elvehjem yet I have to send my children to Frank Allis School across Highway 51.
- We were concerned about the safety issues and low academic standards at Sherman Middle School.
- We were also not happy that by the time our child is in high school, she is on her 4th school. (1) Midvale, (2) Lincoln, (3) Hamilton, (4) West. We prefer either a K-6 or K-8 arrangement. We should be able to attend our neighborhood school longer than 3 years.
- Both our children have attended Madison schools and took both out to attend private schools for their ADHD.
- Overcrowding; academic expectations not as high
- Do not agree with busing my child across town. Believe in neighborhood schools within walking distance.
- Busing required to Lincoln
- We felt the administration did not listen to our concerns.
- Our two oldest (now at West) attended Midvale K- we loved it. However, we were really committed to giving them a Catholic education 1-8th.
- Another observation is that private schools can mandate parent involvement and our does. It has a huge impact (+) on outcomes of the students.
- My wife had concerns that our children wouldn't get as good of an academic education. In particular, she was concerned that teaching wouldn't be tailored to the individual needs of the kids and their individual ways of learning.
- My oldest son is a junior at Memorial and started out Glenn Stephens. He had good teachers and have over a 3.5 GPA. Most of the kids in his age in neighborhood started at Stephens. My youngest son went to Stephens as a kindergartner. More kids his age started going to private schools. I helped out at Stephens for both boys. Even though the class size for my youngest, the teacher spent more time with the minority kids. The class had 4 kids who could not read or speak English. The minority % went from 10% when my oldest went to Stephens to around 50%. My youngest had a great kindergarten teacher. My youngest son is an A students at Queen of Peace and probably attend Memorial.
- Thought of my child going to Toki
- Lower education standards and emphasis on counter culture ideas.
- Overcrowding. We do plan on attending public high school.
- I don't think the busing policy for the Midvale school district is good. I think kids and parents can better participate in school activities when school is in the neighborhood.
- Would have had to bus my child to Lincoln School. We would have preferred they stay at the school close to our house.
- Limited gifted and talented focus. Curriculum/effort skewed to lowest performing segment of student population at the expense of the needs of the highest performance.
- I feel strongly about attending a K-8 school so my decision really came down to them switching to a middle school (Jefferson) is not continuing at one school until 9th grade.
- Actually we used to live in the Verona School system and my oldest two daughters started out there. We then attended Eagle (my youngest two girls were at Eagle from K-8)
- At St. Dennis there are no gangs, no drugs, no weapons - children are expected to behave in a certain manner - when they don't there are consequences. It's safe, it's family, there is a religious element - we worship God and follow His ways.
- Too much wasted time is built into the school day. Substitute teachers aren't always trained to teach so students watch movies, play games, etc. Instead of getting specific academic instruction. Our daughter needs the structure of a school.
- Did not want either of my kids to go to Toki.
- Racism of administrators and teachers in MMSD. They sent my son to ESL simply because he was bilingual. He was a native English speaker!
- The school size is not conducive to learning in the younger years. There is a constant threat of losing the smaller class sizes. It is a huge safety issue.

- Student-to-student violence
- Liberal, progressive thinking should stay away from my kids.
- I think it is extremely positive that you are even asking! We had problems with our oldest 2 children at Shorewood. The problems were completely different but in both cases we felt that our children's educational needs were not being met.
- None other than the full day kindergarten
- She would have been left behind due to attention others would have needed/not made to work to the best of her ability
- District level administration placing barriers in the way of appropriate programming.
- Class size, location of school
- We did not ever look into Madison Public Schools when we moved here.
- Disruptive students
- We planned on St. Dennis all along, but we are concerned about school safety in public schools (also Catholic Schools).
- I am not sure - but I believe MMSD teachers evaluation as FACT - which is both untrue and improper science.
- Perception of "dumbing down" to meet needs of many of kids with intensive learning needs. Less rigorous standards. Disruptive learning environment.
- Religious education; chaotic class/school environment; political correctness, teachers union
- The open acceptance of homosexual lifestyle at some schools (Madison Memorial); severe safety and behavior concerns at Memorial and Falk; General hypocrisy of teachers and school board, i.e. "Yes, it's OK to be Gay but don't pray at school!"
- Lack of half-day kindergarten
- Environment and overcrowded
- When visiting the local grade school years ago and then the high school last year. The students attire and language (by only a few but still there) was not what we have chosen to expose our children to on a daily basis.
- Also - Queen of Peace offered a part-time option for Kindergarten
- Teacher quality, plus the teachers had to deal with discipline issues more than instruction.
- \*Politics\* and overpaid Administrators
- The private school looked like there were more opportunities
- Not being able to celebrate holidays ... Easter and Christmas
- Catholic religion; both parents are from small towns (dislike big school environment); frustrated with the ineffectual conduct of the School Board over the years.
- Moral instruction.
- My child came home and said all he does is coloring and he was very bored.
- Leopold - size of school, over-crowding
- I used to be a Madison substitute. One day before subbing 5th grade at (MMSD school) the principal was worried about putting me with that class. I wanted a school where all classes were decent!
- We had a wonderful experience with the Lapham School and are considering re-enrolling our son in the L-Marquette pairing next year. We believe strongly in neighborhood schools and in public school experiences.
- No consequences given to bullies in school or on the bus. Parents were never called by principal even when asked and bullying students were identified.
- We feel our kids will receive a better education.
- #1-Safety and comfort level of my child and the ability to learn.
- Yes, the above along with the class sizes at Madison School and the environment.
- 1995 (MMSD school) Kindergarten teacher
- Because my son was bigger than most of the students - he was accused a lot of being too rough with the others and even though the principals agreed they still had to call him in and write him up. I got tired of it.

- The location of the school, over-crowding, discipline problems.
- On one hand we like the small (SAGE) class sizes, but on the other hand we didn't feel there were enough kids to make friendships with.
- No Christian holidays acknowledged. Not a strong commitment to sports programs. Not a strong commitment to children in the average level.
- Disruption of children with emotional and behavioral issues. Took up too much of teachers time.
- MMSD seems to lacking order and discipline in many of their schools. I've seen firsthand the lack of order and accountability which is the result of many years of poor management. Under the previous superintendent, the culture was, in my opinion, nurture the trouble makers at the expense of the good students who wanted to learn. I also feel the schools are poorly maintained as well as low expectations of the custodial staff. I realize the custodians are union but that hardly excuses the poor shape most of the MMSD schools are currently in. Again, little or no accountability for custodians who are earning 35K-40K for poor performance. I feel the schools that I have been in are obviously not being cleaned properly. (I don't feel emptying the trash in classrooms "cleaning." Have you considered contract cleaning which would not only give our students a clean environment to learn in, but also save the MMSD millions in taxpayer money. It IS a viable solution to the substandard conditions that are obvious. I would also contract the lawn care, snowplowing and building maintenance. The results, in my opinion, would be a vast improvement. Please call me and I will give more insight on how the MMSD could improve.
- Really its based more on "National" Government run school system. The NEA has introduced or allowed "Special Interest" to be woven throughout its curriculum that WE Don't embrace. IE Global Warming, PETA and Homosexual Based Curriculum. If Christian based beliefs were as accepted as the aforementioned, then there be true openness and tolerance.
- In addition to response above, continuity in core subjects is lacking.
- "Day of Silence" - sexual education instead of abstinence training, observance of all holidays (cultural) except Christian holidays.
- When 1st child began school the climate at our neighborhood elementary school was not appealing. Once we chose our school we were very content and all three attended K-8
- In-equity throughout the schools in the district, less fortunate and people of color do not have the same resources.
- We didn't like the constant talk about "re-zoning" school districts. Certain schools would have required over 45-60 minutes bus ride. No half day kindergarten option. MMSD combine grades.
- We felt the elementary math curriculum was weak and the school environment was too unstructured, loud and a bit chaotic the day we visited.
- Doesn't apply as we moved to Madison from other school district.
- Concern on rigor of academics and safety for new school assigned.
- Crime, poor teachers, uncontrolled classrooms, no moral boundaries, low academic performance exposure to topics by staff/students which are not age appropriate. Teachers who don't/can't give time.
- Bad experiences with a particular school psychologist at (MMSD school) who was very unhelpful during a difficult time in kindergarten.
- Size of classes. More fights, etc. At public schools and drugs and able to say Pledge of Allegiance and pray at meal, lack of dress code enforcement.
- We want our children to be able to pray and discuss moral issue in light of our beliefs which are reinforced in our home.
- I've heard too many stories from friends and neighbors about inappropriate (and tolerated) behavior of children at both Leopold and Cherokee
- The individual attention he got in math was helpful, but the school emphasized - understandably - pulling the bottom half of the class up instead of encouraging the upper half to excel.

- Neighbor's daughter was told by 1st grade teacher to not talk about God when this was/is an important part of child's identity. Teacher can't teach about God but MMSD attempted to shut it down early so kids forever keep it out.
- Safety, friends experiences that the average to above average student is neglected due to the special needs of many.
- We decided prior to kindergarten to send our kids to a Catholic School.
- Over crowding; low academic standards and discipline concerns
- My daughter started at (MMSD school) where one teacher was a disgrace to the profession who targeted Afro-American children, so many parents talked about how their children cried 2-4 times a week. I told the principal I was going to take her out beginning 5th grade, then wrote again to complain, the pressure made her make a change so the racist teacher would not teach my daughter so she finished (MMSD school) and went to (MMSD school), the teaching staff she had for Special Ed (since grade 5) were great, the principal never returned calls. There was too much drama so I had to take her out of the environment and sent her to St. James which I really can't afford. She will be returning to MMSD in the fall when she starts high school as a Special Ed student at East.
- Over crowding at Leopold - our district elementary school
- We met with the TAG coordinator. She was simply spread too thin (among 3 schools) to be of real assistance.
- Was very disappointed/frustrated with the communication regarding entering kindergarten -- there was virtually none. Didn't feel like it mattered that my daughter was joining the district.
- Other students behavior in the classroom interfered with my child's learning at an early age.
- No child left behind act: Little recess time
- Busing - I want my kids to walk to school - not get bused out of the neighborhood. Oldest attended a school on the east side of Madison, but would have been bused to Lincoln when we moved. HATE the busing.
- Evolution teachings
- See above, plus not enough enrichment programs for gifted kids
- Lack of G-T support
- This is a modified yes - we chose a Catholic grade school first for its religious instruction and second because it is a K-8th grade elementary school. My husband and I do not value middle school as much as a K-8th grade experience for our children.
- I visited Jefferson Middle school. I disliked the way the classrooms are set up - much too much noise. I observed a student making sexually suggestive comments to several students in the office area. The staff did nothing.
- Lack of G & T resources/programming
- One gifted coordinator for numerous large schools. For a child performing well above grade-level, no options were clear about how her needs would be handled. Principal did not return phone calls.
- Bussing kids back and forth
- Use red ink to mark answers wrong. Let the child know its wrong so he can learn to correct it - It never hurt my self esteem growing up! I do not want the teacher's liberal one-sided view points influencing my child's decision. Teachers need to present both sides. Example: teachers give extra credit to students who go out and protest, the teachers own personal views (Memorial High). Especially noted during the elections. I'm curious to know if students still say the Pledge of Allegiance? I was at Sennett Middle two years ago for a Forensics meet. There were signs in the hallways encouraging students to come to a gay pride meeting - come on! Must we push kids into this type of behavior when they may not be mature enough (ages 5-8 grade) to even know how their bodies are changing.
- The Law of inclusion-teaching to the lowest level; no grades do not want to give grade - hurt moral, etc; poor leadership; teachers (tenured) are over paid!
- Teaching is tailored to what's next on the schedule, not where the child is. A kid can't focus on all area. Big thing-homework. You have my kid all day - give me my family time at night.

- Poor TAG program. District policy and philosophy regarding gifted education, overcrowded classroom and school building, chaotic environment.
- No TAG programming. The "support" was inadequate - not enough resource teachers to provide adequate support to teachers. Inability to advance in areas of strength was a major concern. Looking ahead consisted of sitting in the corner by yourself with a workbook.
- I've heard of children being "educated" about alternative lifestyles at a young age (i.e. Before 11 or 12) and I've heard of behavior by teachers "plat forming" their views as the only view in areas of theology.
- Does not apply
- I was concerned about class size and the ability for her to go at her own pace perhaps "faster" than regular programming, also really like the Riggs reading program and Singapore math approach.
- The basic problem is systemic to this nation's approach to childhood learning and education: Under fund it and Over test them.
- Our school has a diverse population and the expectations for students is the same for everyone.
- In discussion of priorities, it is always the achievement GAP. If this is really a TOP kp1, THEN LOWERING THE PERFORMANCE OF Top Performers might help. No one would agree this is true, but look at how money is spent and programs allocated. Other KP1"s that help under privileged while not ignoring other needs DO exist.
- Drugs and negative peer pressure
- busing in kids that aren't from our surrounding neighborhood. We moved to this neighborhood because we thought the kids attending this school (Chavez) would be from this neighborhood. 2) They learned about Kwanza and Jewish and Hanukkah, but Christian not allowed.
- School busing outside the neighborhood in grades 3-5 was a huge concern. A K-5 school in the neighborhood was our desire.
- Class size and availability of other programs.
- Low performance state scores for elementary reading.
- Reduced celebration of holidays like Christmas; friends who are teachers state they spend their time disciplining rather than teaching.
- Kindergarten at Lowell in the year that my son attended was a disaster - withdrawals of many children, unruly peers, academics not challenging. The previously mentioned items did not sufficiently change the following year.
- Schools are overcrowded. I don't feel my child would be safe at Leopold - the low income housing across the way is a concern. I have toured the school and believe my child would be bored and terribly intimidated by the congestions.
- Have never used a MMSD School
- Not really, but the private school is much more disciplined and there is little clutter in the classrooms and hall.
- Kennedy School seems very over-crowded with any students in the classroom and in the school overall.
- Our MMSD school was over crowded at the time our oldest was to start kindergarten. It was also consistently ranked below quality standards.
- Too far away, lack of religious freedom, to
- TAG Program, TAG Philosophy of School RE
- Culture, behavior, discipline, safety, respect
- When we toured the school a few years back - it appeared in all the classrooms visited that children were in control vs the teacher. Teachers and students showed no respect for the principal that walk into the classroom - not even a good morning. During our visit the principal; talked with our son - and after he expressed numerous times that a lot of children coming into our kindergarten class didn't know their A,B,C's 1,2,3's etc. Our son knew all that and could do simple addition. We felt our son would be the ONE LEFT BEHIND - due to teachers had to spend so much time getting the other kids up to par. Talking

with neighbors who also had similar experiences with their children. We were thankful that the principal answer our questions truthfully.

- IEP process
- We visited our local MMSD elementary school before our first child was in KG and were struck by the emphasis that the principal placed on incentives for good behavior. Behavioral issues were a big concern at the school and we felt the Catholic School at our parish would provide a better environment for learning
- My children's needs weren't met even with regard to cost-free decisions like placement (clustering with other high-ability kids, placement with teachers interested and experienced in TAG, monitoring from one year to the next to smooth transition).
- For elementary school system, we understood that there isn't/wasn't an A-F grading system. Also, we understood that little or no homework is assigned in elementary school.
- Leopold is overcrowded with a disproportionate number of students who live below the poverty line, thus come from stressed families.
- Religion and Moral Instruction
- Too often, behavioral problems took precedence over learning. Teacher's capabilities were significantly different as were their lesson plans and student expectations. Schools too large and insufficient resources to deal with issues.
- Disruptions in school that made learning environment less than ideal - wasting learning time when teachers had to break up fights or deal with behavior, teachers with low expectations for student achievement.
- There no longer exists - a neighborhood school". Children are bused in every direction.
- My mother in law taught in the Madison Public Schools for over 20 years and she decided to send her son to a parochial school.
- We did not know she was "falling behind" until we received a letter at the end of the year stating that she should enroll in summer school to catch up.
- Size of the schools - too many kids in one building number of students in a classroom - too many students. Too few teachers too much emphasis on standardized tests.
- We had become increasingly alarmed by the negative learning environment evolving at Falk/Toki, fights in the halls, disruptive kids, exasperated teachers & disengaged parents.
- We have heard very positive things about Franklin/Randall, Hamilton & West and wouldn't hesitate to move one of our children if we felt it was in their best interest.
- Traditional teaching
- Excessive bullying directed toward my first child in 3rd grade at Lincoln.
- Crowded, stressful environment, did not meet or address his TAG needs. He was very unhappy at school.
- Discipline Issues
- Safety, teachers
- Pairing System would have my three children at different schools - added stress of coordinating events and transportation - extra driving, kids not able to ride bikes or walk to paired school
- you don't expel anyone anymore. If you did the ones who were left would be the ones ready to learn. It is because you get \$\$ per kid. Vouchers would solve this.
- No free choice to attend a different middle school We pay property tax so we should be able to attend a MMSD middle school of our choice even though it is not in our attendance area.
- Poor - No instruction to (student's) need/level throughout the 1st grade poor race dynamics in his 1st grade class and the school generally.
- Bureaucracy/lack of accessibility poor teacher, service providers - MTI. Large class size, lower behavioral standards for students.



**Please provide any additional comments/suggestions below or attach an additional sheet:**

- I have 4 children, all attended St. Dennis and two currently are at LaFollette and one has graduated. I feel that the school district and the state have taken away from the public school teachers the resources that they need to be able to discipline child. The older children attend or graduated from high school at LaFollette, but because of the solid foundation that they gained at St. Dennis they have made the transition with no difficulties.
- Classes should be streamed to allow equal opportunity to gifted as well as special needs kids. We can't throw the potential for excellence away lightly
- My child was beaten by a violent, most likely mentally ill child (kicked in back repeatedly - he was wearing army boots), and the teacher did not report it. Also, she was restrained by 3 boys at recess, one who screamed "We want your money"
- The overcrowding and un-desirable environment of Leopold, as well as bad recollections of Madison's schools from the 1960s (Hawthorn elementary), in contrast to the high caliber, strict, challenging but very encouraging environment of private school decide
- I transferred my daughter because of the low academic standards and behavior problems in the middle school and I did not see it getting any better at East High School. The behavior problems need to be better controlled and the needs of the high achieving
- We had no problem with Kennedy, where they attended previously. I don't like the idea of middle school and prefer K-8
- We have moved out of Madison now, but as an educator's daughter, I want my child to be in a focused learning environment. I remember things like getting picked on at lunch and recess and the teacher spending all her time with the kid who wouldn't listen
- This survey needs to leave more room for explanations. Checking boxes doesn't help you understand much about individual circumstances. I checked "I" above in question #1 because in my daughter's 4th grade class of 25, 5 kids were functionally illiterate,
- I would like to see higher standards for all students. Celebration of academic rigor and challenge in middle school.
- 3 problems with MMSD: 1) Integrated classrooms (with SED & ESL kids) can be very distracting for non-SED or ESL kids. While it's great to teach diversity, it can make the learning environment tough for kids. My child frequently told me his teacher was
- More insurances that art and music program will stay and be funded. Magnet schools...Montessori or arts focused.
- A safe environment is paramount. Strong leadership from the Principal down to the teachers is next in line. My child was threatened with being stabbed, was chased down by three other children who's intention was to beat him up.
- It is very obvious that MMSD does not want to support accelerated curricula or Talented and Gifted programs when you look at the ratio of T and G personnel to students as compared to Middleton or Verona etc.
- You must be willing to acknowledge both a child's gifts and his deficiencies and be willing to provide programming for BOTH. Otherwise a kid may programming for neither, because they cancel each other out. Or he gets labeled as a naughty kid.
- Teachers at Blackhawk said they wouldn't send their own kids there. The culture is to not be educated, that's what cool.
- Several physical assaults in 6th and 7th at Toki ended any shaky sense of personal safety he may have had with the very few defenders he previously had. Academics were not as challenging as he needed, but daily harassment by others. Quit excusing outrageous and "pile on" behavior in "some groups" of kids. Increase the benefits the caring peers receive from reaching out and assisting and defending (with friendship and acceptance) the marginalized children.

- I have heard from neighborhood friends that their children do not have spelling tests. They also say they can not "show" their children how to multiply to solve a math problem. The teachers want the children to figure out math problems on their own.
- Would not send children to MMSD K-8 Schools. My daughter was at Frank Allis for Kindergarten, and I was very disappointed with the behavioral problems that she learned from other students. It seemed to us that the lower income the child came from, the more. Son is now enrolled at LaFollette. LaFollette is a good school and my son is very happy there. You can thank their principal for that!!
- The MMSD is so concerned about catering to the vocal minority and being inclusive and politically correct that there is no moral compass and even less any mechanism for that direction to be expressed by administration and staff.
- While I recognize that Madison is blessed to have a solid public school system, we chose Wingra for a myriad of reasons. The values that Wingra encompasses mirrors our own personal values. We also chose Wingra because of the smaller class sizes.
- Although the teaching staff is mostly excellent at Leopold and my older children did well there, too many years of overcrowding and the increase in transient low income children negatively affected staff morale. It was not a happy learning environment.
- It is my opinion and belief that my child is receiving a higher quality of education provided by her private school. She has friends in our neighborhood who attend a Madison school, and the children never have homework, and are always interested in learning.
- My initial encounter with the MMSD School board in trying to address valid safety concerns with our oldest child was such a disappointment - I don't think that I will ever consider sending my children to a MMSD elementary or middle school.
- I would consider public school for my child(ren) but the after school would have to be affordable. We all pay property taxes whether your a homeowner or not and whether your legal to be here or not. We should all benefit from this.
- Our primary reason for not choosing MMSD was that we wanted a Catholic education. Another perceived disadvantage however, was the overcrowding at Leopold, our local school and the uncertainty about future action for that problem.
- We are still strong supporters of public school education. Our son graduated from Madison East in 2008 and did have some positive relationships with teachers and administrators but was also intimidated at times by the aggressive and disinterest/disruptive students in the building. He resented having his classes disrupted by these students.
- Thank you for requesting our feedback.
- We feel that the private school gave our children a good starting point in their education. We also have a child in high school at JMM and feel that she is getting a very good education.
- My son is a freshman at La Follette for 1st time this year 2008-2009
- Teachers should be responsible for education of so many children when there are behavior/learning problems. The well behaved children are left on their own for much of class. Many teachers did very well keeping our kids challenged, interested and engaged in class, however, the face-to-face time was disappointing. The teachers we had at Crestwood were wonderful, but they were in a situation where they had to spend time on the more difficult students... And there were more of them every year.
- West High older son.
- I wish we could get tax reimbursement for saving so much \$ by sending our kids to private schools.
- Repercussions for bad choices are needed for all the kids. Creative ideas so kids have a full belly in school -- no playing on the playground before school. Teach the children how to listen before attempting to teach. If they have never been taught to listen -- nothing will work. Don't make assumptions about basic learning. Have a program in order to gauge kids listening abilities. Can they sit still? If no, teach it, can they focus, if not, then how long. Give the teachers a class to teach them how to be clearer to all children. The poor and the middle class. It's really difficult for the teachers to balance this disparity

between children. In my experiences the kids who needed help were given most of the attention in school. There are no advanced classes for K-4. We're told that clustering helps the children who are high achievers but I think that's a load of crap when you're dealing with a bright mind who wants to do more, learn more, experience more. Diversity is wonderful if all involved are given what they need not just needy. My experience at Lowell was anxiety provoking.

- Education is everything. If kids are messing-up in school and getting in trouble with the law then they are the future of Madison that will ruin this city. Madison is a city with "big city" education problems. If these problems are not fixed it will end up like many big city schools where 1/2 the schools are failing and the other 1/2 are elite unaffordable zip codes with excellent schools. Good Luck!
- My oldest child has been in Madison Public Schools, he is now in high school, he is a very bright kid but he is not a self-starter and has fallen between the cracks in the public schools, there are too many distractions in the classrooms and not enough support. Teachers cannot effectively teach because they have so many behavior problems to try to deal with but cannot due to fear of lawsuits and IEP's. I have 3 younger children in private school who are leaps and bounds ahead of their brother all because I could not afford private school when my oldest was little. I had my oldest in a virtual school recently and he did a thousand times better. It is definitely an option I would consider again.
- If there was a school that our children could walk to then we would have sent them to public. Midvale is 1/4 mile from our house but because of the busing to Lincoln for part of their education we did not use public schools.
- In today's environment with drugs, gangs, etc.; the high schools are too big to be able to deal with those challenges effectively. I did consider sending my child to West which has an excellent curriculum. For my child, smaller is better and the focus on college prep offered @ Edgewood met our own needs better. Madison has a tendency to cater to the "problems" in our community thinking that blending with the rest will help bring up the whole. This has proven to be not true. I did not want my child to be affected by this thinking. Again I know this is not the politically correct this to say, but this is what I think.
- 1st child - 1 year; 2nd child 5 years; 3rd child 0 years.
- We never even considered a private school for our children before we were exposed to MMSD Middle Schools. MMSD middle schools are disgraceful. You need to get the schools under control. Hopefully our HS options will be better in 2 years! (I doubt it, however.) I've seen a number of large fights outside of your HS (Lafollette). The violence is outrageous.
- Our oldest now attend West High. Overall public schools need more structured discipline in the classrooms in order to represent the real world experiences when kids grow and join the work forces in their communities. Teaching respect, ethics and contributing to the social good must begin at an early age. Hopefully by the time kids grow to their teen years. They have a good send of citizenship, moral character, and respect for each other. I also know teachers need parental assistance at home, as they cannot do it by themselves. If these issues to not change, then it is just a continuous cycle from classroom - to homes - to the streets.
- Sibling attended La Follette High. A/P classes offer best academic option for a student moving from the academic level of grade school (private) to public high school. Example most St. Dennis Spanish students enter Spanish II in public high school.
- Our daughter was attending 6th grade at Whitehorse and often came home crying because of mean students, rude behavior, foul language and disrespect for the teachers. As parents, we felt very uncomfortable with the atmosphere at Whitehorse. It always seemed very loud and chaotic. In a nutshell, it just didn't seem like a positive learning environment. She was getting straight A's, never had any homework and wasn't being challenged academically. At ALCS, her grades have taken a hit because the curriculum is more challenging. In fact, we've discovered that both of our children are a full grade behind at ALCS because of the MPS curriculum. In general, at the MPS there is a lack of respect for authority and no accountability by the students for their actions. Personal responsibility doesn't exist, and isn't being taught. It's not just MPS

but society in general. ALCS offers better academics and a better education. Our kids are learning how to be good citizens as well as students.

- Thank you for this survey. It is heartening to know that the new superintendent seeks to learn the perspectives of parents within the community he serves. I wish him great success.
- He had a great Kindergarten experience. Also our 2nd son got some very good speech therapy (pre-school age) from the teacher at Franklin. It's just that one bad classroom and chaos was too much to repeat for an entire 2nd year. Kids don't get "do-over's."
- Please see the attached letter.
- I would greatly enjoy my children to attend Madison Public Schools, however, I am not in favor of the busing to Lincoln from our Westmoreland neighborhood -- my husband and I don't agree with the distance of this trip and the terrible neighborhood that it is located in (2 murders in 1 year!) Think of the \$ saved if children could walk to their school - instead we spend \$ on shipping them all over town -- maybe in these economic times things should be re-looked at.
- While the new school (Olsen) in our neighborhood is beautiful and I've heard both positive and negative about it. I think it is the middle school (Toki) that has several parents very concerned and looking a private options. While our decision to attend a private school was based more on our circumstances of moving so often and wanting a smaller school, we may look at the public school for our two younger children not in school yet. Hopefully there may be a new middle school in our area by then!
- We, as parents, also wanted to find an environment where the majority of students and parents valued the same educational values as we. We looked for a very high achieving school academically, but also a school where the church is your school family and vice versa. The ability to study, play and worship together on weekdays and weekends intertwines our likes and makes us all stronger.
- Last summer my son did MMSD summer school. Interested in that again possibly. How do I get him to qualify again - now that he's in private school (Walbridge)? I would like some day for my son to go back to public school if he could do his grade level work.
- I see now MMSD need as stronger, more comprehensive areas of study/learning curriculum (I hesitate to use this word, as its very misunderstood) there is not enough learning happening in the area of academics in the E.S. levels, and we're losing it in our Middle Schools. Please maintain the Excellence of Academics in our High School - we need to continue to Compete in the world!
- K-2
- I have heard numerous complaints about public Madison schools regarding safety and lack of teacher concern. I am happy with the school they are attending even though it is expensive. I wish that families like us could get a tax break. It just doesn't seem fair to have to pay for public schools and the tuition fees for going to a private school.
- The smaller environment, more rigorous academic atmosphere and the Christian instruction make Westside Christian a great choice for our family. Thanks for asking!
- My sense of trust with MMSD teachers is low enough that I don't really even believe these concerns will be listened to with an open mind. My white friends tell me that teachers interpret their worries about safety as racism. But most of us parents are concerned about safety - not just at school, but also on busses, at bus stops, etc. We are also concerned about low expectations of our kids and about them being perceived in negative ways that don't reflect who they are. Supporting public schools is a value I hold close. I was denied requests for open enrollment. Friends of mine whose daughter was beaten up at a bus stop were also denied a transfer. She later dropped out of school, afraid for her safety. MMSD has got to start admitting its weaknesses and asking for public support.
- Kindergarten through high school

- My daughter was very interested in attending West. She shadowed at Edgewood and West and enjoyed them both. The reason she finally decided on Edgewood was because if it didn't work out, she could transfer to West. Since Edgewood has a waiting list, she couldn't have gotten into Edgewood if she started at West and it didn't work out.
- We moved to the Madison area, in part, to be part of the Eagle community. Our daughter has four cousins who graduated from Eagle and were superbly prepared for high school and college. Eagle has a history of grads with national-class academic results (although this, to my knowledge, is not published and, if kept, not disused). Classes there comprise children of similar ability, not necessarily age. There is a serious community of interest - academic excellence. Homework is extensive and rigorous. Class size is 13-15 max. Children received a great deal of individual attention.
- My daughter will go to West next year and we expect it will be great. We'd be happier if she could take Western Civilization next year instead of twiddling her thumbs in a repetition of American history, but... I think the Madison Public Schools are pretty great. Our daughter, though, had anger and impatience issues that were exacerbated by her having to wait for other kids to finish things. She needed a smaller school where those issues would be addressed. EAGLE has really been a great place for her.
- I have two children - both girls. The 7th grader stayed @ Blessed Sacrament. We chose to support the new school, Olson, because it is in our neighborhood. We currently have a 3rd grader @ Olson. Prior to 3rd grade my other daughters also attended Blessed Sacrament. We were very disappointed to learn, at the last minute, our middle school would change from Jefferson to Toki. If it stays this way we will once again return our other child to a private school. Toki is out-of-control and is an unacceptable choice. If Madison is unable to provide quality education for my daughter, I will find a private that will.
- We are considering East High as a High School.
- Verona Charter School is our ideal choice for schools due to programs available. We are moving to Middleton School District for our oldest son's H.S. education. Do not want to send our son to La Follette, which is our high school.
- We appreciate the cooperative effort to provide busing to private school students.
- West High older child.
- LaFollette High School
- I want my child in a safe environment in an atmosphere of discipline, love and respect. I am not at all convinced he would get that at an MMSD School.
- If you want to make your schools work better you have to make the teachers more responsible at their job. They will do that, when they see that their job may be eliminated. If you will start a program by giving the right to a student to use the amount of money (\$13,000 a school year per student) to a school of his choice, private or public school of another district, the public schools are going to look at what are they doing wrong, and not ask for tax increases. Try and do what is being done in Europe. Do not let the teachers union ruin our kids future.
- 1. Parents are actively involved at our school 2. Taking God out of school DID NOT WORK. (THE WEBSITE FOR YOUR SURVEY DIDN'T WORK).
- As a Madison taxpayer, it is very frustrating to watch the politics at play in the MMSD. We have been involved parents at Queen of Peace for the past six years and have seen how a disciplined, challenging school can be created with limited dollars. Millions seem to be wasted in the MMSD and the politics of the teacher's union seems to have a very negative affect on the MMSD. Best wishes to Dr. Nerad. We hope he brings change and good results.
- Includes high school
- Most everything is on the front. Ultimately we had a horrible experience. Our son is very intelligent but also incredibly sensitive. We felt that people were not listening to us or him and were just looking to "fix the child," not the environment. At Blessed Sacrament, the environment is consistent, clean, orderly and the expectations for all of the children is the same. A much better environment for our son. We hope to move him back into the public schools in 6th grade if he has firm footing and feels secure.

- Elvehjem Ele. would have been the MMSD elementary school our kids would attend, and we've heard nothing but good things; we probably would have been happy sending them there. However, I'm not sure there is any middle school w/in MMSD to which I would've been comfortable sending my kids. Also, since the beginning of this school year, 2 or 3 1st graders have transferred to St. Dennis from LVM, so I wonder about that. Having worked as a police officer for the City of Madison for 7+ years I was amazed at the # of calls we received to the elementary schools for behavior issues (in addition to middle and high school.) I knew COPS officers who taught safety curriculum @ the 4th-5th grade level in both MMSD schools and private schools, and noted huge differences in classroom/campus behavior. All said the teachers were outstanding but it was obvious that other environmental factors played a role in level of student respect of each other and adults. We wish to send our kids to a school with families that share the same beliefs on respect, attitude and behavior. Having said that, we had had a good experience with a foster son who went through Sennett and Lafollette. However, the thought of sending our kids to one of the MMSD high schools concerns me. I'm not sure that any of the private options are any better w/regards to (-)s such as drugs/alcohol, but I think personal safety would be better. Also, I would prefer a smaller school.
- We feel strongly that a child's long term success stems from a strong educational foundation. These goals are achieved by providing students with challenging curriculum. However, we believe that additionally you must train children to respect those in authority, to be disciplined in their actions, and to understand the value of education. Unfortunately, public schools have tied the hands of their teachers and administration so that the students can basically do what they please. Our college age daughter spent several weeks observing students in an East side elementary as part of her curriculum. she observed students who were "out of control." This is not a strong learning environment. When you remove moral values, this is the result. That is why we send our children to a private school.
- \*We are unhappy with the MMSD's policy or "trend" to each year request property taxes for new referendums. Our schools cost per student is approx \$4,000.00. MMSD's is over \$13,000! We feel our child is getting a superior education and the cost per child is so much less. Surely your district can find ways to see that "less" is "more." \*We are so happy with our schools "in house" after school and summer childcare program. The quality of care for the price can't be beat. \*We feel that our choice to attend St. Dennis was the best option and would not consider any other option for our next child. We are not wealthy by any means, but the sacrifices we have made for our child children's) education is well worth it. However, we'd love it if MMSD would offer a voucher program to help offset the cost since our children do not and will not attend MMSD.
- We started Kindergarten at Leopold, but withdrew for 2nd semester. The issues we had were behavioral. Our son is a bright, well-behaved child, but extremely influence by his environment. When he saw that misbehavior was the best way to get attention, we started having issues. The other problem was not having different levels of instruction. He was bored with what they were doing, but pretended he could not do more in order to fit in. Pre-screening could be done in kindergarten to determine what level children are at right always and could eliminate some possible behavior issues. While not all bright kids will fit into 'gifted' category, they would benefit from being pushed more.
- We moved here from Charlotte, NC where our children attended a small private school. We like the smaller schools because we feel there is less "peer pressure and playground problems." We also have found there is a lot of parental involvement in a small private school.
- Our son attended Shorewood in '99 for 1/2 year. The math program was weak so we left.
- Thank you for soliciting our input. We did not appreciate the attitude of the previous superintendent who did not seem to appreciate our financial support (through taxes) of the Madison Metropolitan School District.
- 1-8 Oldest attended grades 1-8 and will continue. Child who transferred to Eagle attended K-4 and will go to West High School. We attempted to get TAG programming for our daughter but with little success. Our daughter was becoming a distraction in the MMSD classroom as she socialized and got silly. She loves the challenging curriculum at Eagle and be valued for her intellect. If it's helpful to know, she was evaluated by a social psychologist and scored a 139 IQ.

- The K-8 option is nice when you have more than one child. There is only one principal, one set of staff members, etc. to deal with. We volunteer at school and having both children in one school reduces the number of volunteer opportunities/commitments. Fund-raising efforts are also combined. Additionally there is only one drop off/pick up site.
- Our son's kindergarten teacher made it very clear that attention to a gifted child's needs for enhanced or more advanced curriculum was not her priority. She resented him because we dared to ask. The principal supported her. The attitude in general was anti-TAG. We went to Eagle where he found challenging curriculum and support for his learning style.
- When our oldest daughter was ready for K we visited our local school on "community day." We were the only visitors all day. That in itself was sad. We spoke with other parents and they identified a problem with lots of busy work type. That was another problem for us. Most important, however, we expected that our kids would be TAGS type kids (as they turned out to be) and we were concerned that they not be burned out with dull, repetitious tasks and that they not turn into behavior cases due to boredom and lack of challenge. We therefore thought that a multi-age classroom would give them the opportunity to excel without drawing attention to the fact that they were opportunity to excel without drawing attention to the fact that they were operating above grade level. In fact, that worked well -- our oldest is now a college freshman, was excited to get to H.S. (she and her sister both went to La Follette) and not turned out like their public school peers. So, we are satisfied by our choice and our son is following the same path.
- He attended kindergarten at Sandburg and about 6 weeks of 1st grade
- Integration lowers the education level in the classroom due to home problems, language issues and lower social standards. This is not fair to the average middle-income child who is sent to school to learn. Suggestion: 1) Allow neighborhood schools where children can walk to and from school (NO forced Busing); 2) Require parents to be responsible for the child's education and participate in the classroom; 3) Do not lower education standards for children w/discipline, drug, language problems; 4) Do not offer 4 year old kindergarten. Parents should be responsible for 4 yr old education programs - not the city, State Government!
- 5th grader @ Lincoln
- My husband and I both graduated from Madison Public Schools and find that the schools have declined considerably. My husband coaches freshman football at a Madison school and nearly quit coaching this year due to the atrocious behavior of the children. It's time things were addressed directly and expediently. Teaching clearly about right and wrong, acceptable and unacceptable behavior, respect for authority and property, caring for others, etc., are all foundations to strength in education. You can choose to act and improve it or ignore it and continue to witness decline.
- Our older kids attend West High and our youngest will attend West also.
- Not for grade school, although my son is now at memorial and likes it a lot!
- He was at Chavez. Teachers in MMSD were great but large class and inability to deal effectively with trouble makers held class hostage. This was a problem with every teacher we met in the 4 years of MMSD attendance, so not just the individual teacher's problem. Numerous disabled children in class was also very distracting with their aides, animals, hair-pulling, etc.
- We have had two daughters make the transition from Queen of Peace to JMM and they are both doing well and maturing in this new environment. JMM needs money for maintenance projects -- before the roof falls in. The social studies area is particularly depressing. A nicer building environment would contribute to more pride in the school.
- Prior to enrolling our children in a private school, I visited both Lakeview Elementary and Sherman Middle School. Although we believed that Lakeview was fine, we were very concerned about behavioral issues and the lower academic standards at Sherman. As a result, we chose a private school, but is our sincere hope that our children will attend East HS. We are very impressed with (principal) at East and the level of academic offerings at East. We have a dilemma however, because our kids will not have gone to public school prior to attending East and we understand how difficult that can be for kids in high school. We hope that you will take a serious look at Sherman M.S. We regret that its problems are adversely affecting

property values in Maple Bluff -- and so many kids have left! We look forward to any and all improvements possible both for behavior, academic achievement as we would like nothing more than to send our children to the public schools.

- His older sister now attends West and we are very happy.
- Oldest 6yrs - youngest 2 yrs
- Son will be attending Madison West High School in fall 09 as a freshman.
- My daughter is at Cherokee. There are many things I do like, however, the kids do not learn study habits like are reinforced in the private school.
- And we are sad we waited that long to change. I was a huge public school proponent and was saddened by the poor education we received with MMSD.
- 2 students at West High - went to Midvale in first then to Queen Peace for 1-8 then to West High.
- Son K-3rd
- Began attending this school in Kindergarten
- The school our children attend has been a major point of contention between my wife and me. I really want all our children going to Thoreau. She really wants that none of our children go there. I've been extremely satisfied w/Thoreau. She's been very dissatisfied with Thoreau. I think our older daughter is getting a terrific education there, both academically and in terms of the socioeconomic and racial diversity there. Superintendent Nerad, I've heard great things about you and am thrilled you are our new superintendent. I hope you will do your all to improve our already good schools. Thank you in advance for your efforts.
- Oldest went to Randall through 5th grade.
- 1st child 3 yrs - K-2
- The MMSD needs to teach not social work, not feed breakfast, but to teach. MMSD is so concerned about teaching Spanish and the Strings department, they forget about math, ENGLISH class, Social Studies and other essential classes. We tax payers are sick of wasting our tax dollars on feeding kids breakfast. That should be done at home. That's what WIC and food stamps were for. If you taught instead of thought of ways to avoid offending anyone, then MMSD might be a worthwhile institution. GOD BLESS YOU. Sorry, did I offend you using God?
- We went to Queen of Peace because it was so highly recommended by friends and family, and we really didn't hear positive things about MMSD grade schools.
- Oldest child is a freshman at Memorial
- My son is a junior at West; started there after finishing 8th grade at Queen of Peace.
- Dear Mr. Nerad, I'm thrilled you and your team are taking the time to solicit parent feedback. I wish you and (staff) the best of luck in re-directing the Madison school and TAG programs. Our daughter needs a school that Madison elementary schools can't at this point provide. That's OK for us, because we are lucky to have EAGLE School which is a gem. Not all gifted kids know about it or can afford to attend. That being said, we would love to attend Madison Public High School when the time comes. As a Harvard College alumni interviewer, I am very concerned with the systematic decline of West High School. The elimination of AP courses is a huge disadvantage to the mightier students who need to take these courses for college applications. Its unrealistic and unfair to think West students should travel to Memorial to take the classes they need. We have world class scientists and educators come to the UW. Madison needs to take seriously the education of their children who often are in need of the challenging classes and teachers that places like West are disbanding. The ability of UW to recruit world class people is a strategic asset. Who is going to move their bright kids to a school system that does not allow them to reach their potential?? Recognizing that my personal and extra-curricular activities skew toward supporting our most talent children. I recognize you have many competing constituencies to balance. I'm hopeful that your administration can rebuild the competitiveness of our high schools in placing students at the best U.S. colleges. Given that there has been a significant rise in foreign national/applications/acceptances at our best universities, has increased pressure



and qualifications bar for U.S. high school students. It's fair to say that Madison Public high schools are generally not reaching the potential that I personally a Harvard College Interviewer would like to see. There is no reason they can't, if you and the rest of the school administration choose to build National Class Public High Schools. Should you ever wish to discuss this more, I would be glad to. Best of luck and thank you for soliciting comments.

- I would have been pleased with Crestwood - as I said it was a middle school decision. I do intend on my kids attending Memorial. This survey is a great idea!
- Our daughter (attended K-5 @ Kennedy) is a student who tends to do only what is expected of her academically. At Eagle School she is forced to work at a higher level just to keep up with the rest of her class. While her school's population is much less diverse (a definite negative) there are also far fewer discipline issues among her classmates (a definite positive). We have been involved public school parents and believe in the role of public schools, but feel our daughter's personality would be best served at Eagle for her middle school years. We expect to re-enroll her in a MMSD high school at grade 9.
- I would like to see (student name) get into Spring Harbor for grades 7 & 8. I think that the classes need to be evaluated for size, second language and behavioral issues.
- West is an excellent high school (if you take the right classes). But the elementary schools in Madison are a joke and middle school does not have any academic content at all.
- Leopold has too many safety concerns. I attempted an internal transfer and was denied.
- My daughter did go to Falk for Kindergarten, where her brother had gone 3 years before. There had been a spot for her in K at Queen of Peace, but we really wanted her to be able to be in (staff name) K class (plus, Falk had full day K, QP had only 1/2 day). Her class was more than 50% "special needs" students - emotional, behavioral, etc. The teachers and T.A. spent a large portion of their time and energy everyday dealing with these students. It was not the greatest year (2 examples: 1) one classmate "friend" would call our house late at night - sometimes as late as midnight. We could always hear a houseful of adults in the background. Sometimes she asked for my daughter, sometimes she said nothing. Caller ID showed the caller. We stopped answering and turn the ringer off; 2) one day after school my daughter asked if I knew that "fxk" was a real word. I told her I did but it was a very nasty word that neither adults nor children should use and she should not use/ repeat it again. She said that 2 of her classmates used it all the time.) I don't have anything against any special needs children, mainstreamed or not, nor do I believe any child has any less of a right to a quality education than another. However, when emotional and behavioral issues dominate the instruction time, it interferes with the education that (most of) the children are there for. We were very fortunate that Q.P still had an opening for our daughter for first grade. FYI our son was on a waiting list at QP but an opening never happened for him - he went all the way through Falk & Toki and is now at JMM and did not have the issues we had with our daughter's year. She will, by the way, be attending JMM year after next.
- She will attend Edgewood next year
- If MMSD can reimburse the bus fare, it makes sense to issue voucher to parents who sent kids to private schools. Not necessary a dollar to a dollar - something like \$3000. Or \$5000 is a good start for this righteous thinking.
- We plan to send our child to public school after 8th grade
- In the case of our oldest daughter, she had significant difficulty learning to read. Her 1st grade teacher used an exclusively whole language approach. When we went to the fall conference and met with the teacher and her student teacher, they agreed that our daughter could not read at all. We pointed out that she could not sound out even simple words and we were told she must not have been paying attention the day they explained how to do this (I am not making this up). We ended up pursuing private tutoring 4 days a week after school with a wonderful, retired MMSD teacher. Our daughter was not only behind her peers academically, but was starting to resist going to school. By the end of her 1st grade year with a phonics-based approach, she was reading at a 4th grade level. I spent considerable time reading and learning about reading instruction and while I understand that there is no single best approach, the rigid whole language option available to my daughter does not meet her needs. The case of my middle daughter represented the other end of the spectrum. She was

particularly capable and her 1st grade teacher advised that she be placed in 3rd grade SAGE programming instead of the 2nd grade curriculum. This was a good choice because she was happy and excelled in that setting. The problem came at the transition to 4th grade. Despite many efforts to advocate for her not repeating the 3rd grade curriculum, we were unsuccessful. She spent the year reading the identical things she had done successfully the year before (e.g. Reading Charlotte's Web, sending a letter to her grandparents, math progress, etc.) Not only was this a waste of time academically to a large extent, but she also thought there was something wrong with her (why don't they think I learned this?). Finally, I did not feel that the school administration was responsive. My husband and I were willing to defer to the education but felt that there was no reasonable explanation or discussion regarding our concern. In both cases, our concerns were minimized by school staff and we were essentially told to sit back and wait. I have thought a long about the problems that plague the Madison Schools and there are clearly no easy answers. But, ultimately as a parent it is one's responsibility to do what you think is best for your children and it is our opinion that a positive educational experience and a love of learning are the foundations of a full and meaningful life.

- We also have a sophomore at Memorial. It would be great if MMSD could get high school reps into the parochial schools to meet with the 7th & 8th grade students. Edgewood High inundates our students with materials and opportunities to shadow current students. They hold open houses and make you believe you would really be providing your child with the best academic experience. Fortunately, (principal) and his team were wonderful to my older daughter when she was in 7th & 8th grade at QP. She shadowed at Memorial and decided that was the place for her even though the vast majority of her friends were going to Edgewood. I know that many more families in this years 7th & 8th grade classes are considering public high school options. I would be glad to help facilitate getting athletic and academic info from MMSD high schools into Queen of Peace. Thanks.
- K-5 at Thoreau. MMSD has been less than willing to accommodate for bright learners? The mantra is that "they'll get what they need." (Staff name) was the only educator in the district who listened and assisted us! Middle school programming lacks rigor and teaches to the middle. High school has moved the same way - few AP options and 9-10 requirements regardless of ability or need. Now - discrimination against Edgewood families and busing this year - unbelievable!
- Disruptive students in school is my #1 concern; 2) Forced busing of students to schools outside of their immediate neighborhoods. Makes absolutely no sense; and 3) Safety of students at MMSD is becoming more of a problem.
- Both children have gone to St. Dennis starting in kindergarten, they haven't attended any public school.
- I would really like a choice program - to divert the tax money we give to public school - to be able to be used for our children's private school education, thank you.
- Incoming freshman at Edgewood, coming from private schools, by and large are better prepared than kids coming from public schools. From our observations and comments from parents of public high school students - it appears as though academic standards and expectations are higher at Edgewood and Blessed Sacrament. I attended public junior high and high school in Milwaukee graduating in 1976. It was an incredibly frustrating experience due to all the interruptions of disruptive students. I have seen Madison schools reaching in the same direction and I wanted better for my kids.
- Kindergarten & summer school.
- I think the Madison School District should stop social engineering at the expense of my neighborhood and its children. I feel children should go to neighborhood schools. It encourages parents to take ownership in the school. Sending my children to schools which I don't have emotional involvement just discourages active participation in that school.
- I am a certified teacher and I felt what Leopold Elementary had to offer was below the standards I expect from a school. We are considering moving to an area where we could enroll our children in the Verona or Middleton Schools.
- We seriously looked into our neighborhood MMSD grade school - three different times for financial reasons -- however chose in the end to find a way to pay the tuition for a Christian education and what seems to be stricter discipline (granted only three visits but it was initial impression).

- I am very impressed that this letter went out! This is the first time we were ever contacted by the school district, we have attended QP the past five years! I appreciate that an effort was made to reach out and ask these questions. Thank you!
- 1 yr @ Thoreau. My oldest son will be attending East in the Fall 09.
- Superintendent Nerad, thank you for asking my family about the choice we have made regarding our son attending a private school. I have been waiting for an appropriate opportunity to share this. First, it is important to recognize the excellence of your staff: teaching assistants, teachers and administrators. They have demonstrated their knowledge of the curriculum as well as their ability to show concern and kindness of the heart. They were never a cause or concern that led to the decision to turn to a private school. The curriculum is also excellent; it is something that we have traded for what the private school offers. My child wants a calmer learning environment than what the Madison public schools can offer. He was intimidated by the overcrowding and he became increasingly frustrated with the non-compliant, bullying, rude and violent student behaviors.
- Each time my student rode a bus, his person or personal property was "abused." 2. Passing time in the halls, with its overcrowding, provided opportunity for students to open his backpack and steal items. This happened frequently enough that he bought little locks for it. 3. Class-time was lost due to inappropriate student behaviors. 4. In one Phy-ed class, some boys would intentionally knock down the pins in my sons lane, time-after-time. Because my son was intimidated by then; he wouldn't say anything to the staff. These students would sabotage activities so that no one enjoyed doing it. 5. My son was beaten-up by 4 students in a boy's bathroom. He was given an out-of-school suspension, because he was there... In the bathroom. As the victim of violent student behavior, he was treated the same as the perpetrators, due to district policy. 6. Five neighborhood girls were bullying my son and his friend at school. The boys would ignore the girls' behaviors. When these girls became frustrated, they wrote-up something to make it look like it was a "copy and paste" dialogue from the instant messaging of a popular internet game. The content was written in such a way as to infer that the boys were in a homosexual relationship. The girls were intent on bullying them and publicizing this contrived story. The consequence was a talk on "don't do that again." Meanwhile, the other boy's mother and I were left with the torn shreds of a friendship. My interpretation of the situation was that the girls weren't given an appropriate consequence for their behaviors because they were seen as nice girls. Initially, we asked and petitioned the school for a transfer to another Madison public school. It was denied. My hypothesis was that he needed to stay at the school in order to help balance the race ratio. The decision to attend a private school was not based upon a few examples listed above. It was the yearly compilation of the many events over time that brought us to this point.
- This survey seems to me to be a very superficial way to address this topic. My impression is that parents who send their children to private schools in Madison are either very pro-private school, anti-Madison public school or both. The ridiculous antics of the school board over the past 20 years (engaging in political crusades, busing students to schools distant from their homes, threatening to eliminate busing for private school students) have soured me to even considering sending my children to one of these schools. Probably the best strategy you would offer would be to hold open houses at public schools so parents could decide if the schools are nurturing centers for education, or not. Also, let students go to school in the neighborhood where they live.
- One at Blessed Sacrament and one at Edgewood High
- There should be a smoother 'transition process' from private into the public schools, especially at the (just before) high school level. Possible school visits, emails, etc. P.S. Thanks for asking.
- Transfer decisions seem somewhat random. Last year, one of our neighbors was released to the Verona district, one was allowed to transfer to Shorewood, yet we were denied transfer to Thoreau. All children in question were entering Kindergarten.
- Attended Hawthorne
- We are in the Falk/Toki school district.

- Although MMSD tries to do a good job at helping everyone out, we have protected everyone to a fault...; where we can't embrace simple holidays and traditions anymore (All uniqueness is gone). People get so worked up about the 10 Commandments, but then call them the "10 suggestions," b/c certain things like stealing, murder are just wrong and the public schools have lost sight of that. I feel for the kids who will never learn about Christmas, Kwanza, Valentines Day or any other Holiday? That has been lost in the system. Please get it back on track!
- I do not have a problem with MMSD. My older child does adequate work through MMSD and is very social. She would not do well in a private, smaller setting. My youngest attended Montessori through 1st grade and attended Van Hise for 2nd grade. The large school setting, the bussing and the fact that my daughter was in tears when the discussion came up for returning to Van Hise for 3rd grade, led to an abrupt transfer back to Montessori. My children have two very different personalities. I anticipate that my younger one will return to MMSD for high school, when I hope that the maturity level is there to fend off any emotional bullying. Thanks for asking!
- This is our 3rd child to attend Lakeside Lutheran in 9 years. This is the right choice for us, where we can count on a good education and not have to worry about guns, police in the halls. The faculty is committed to the best education for the kids, when they know personally. We chose to send our 3 children to private grade and high schools. It is right for us and them. Please do not make us also pay for your Public Day Care programs, at some point parents do have to take a responsibility for THEIR children, it is not always someone else's problem.
- Currently we have 1 child at West and one who graduated from West
- I really liked the SAGE program -- 2. But honestly according to my son - in 4th grade he said the teachers @ St. Dennis were much happier than @ Lindbergh. My son was having a hard time in 3rd grade and just not liking it -- so we moved him. I think alot of it was not enough peers that were at his level physically. My son is a East High now.
- Attended Midvale
- With all of the resources that are saved by MMSD, I find it unreasonable that bussing for the Catholic Schools was threatened. I'm glad to hear that a short term solution (at least) was determined.
- 1 Semester Kindergarten at Thoreau and now a freshman at West. Thank you for doing this. I always wondered, for the 10 years my children have not used the public schools, why no one asked why.
- My son had an IEP in prek-3rd grade. He needed academic help. In 2nd and 3rd grade it was hard for him to get the attention he needed. The teachers and special ed teachers had to give so much time to behavioral and emotional disturbed students. Most of them not diagnosed. It was frustrating. (Staff names) were amazing at trying to help him - but it was too much for them - or anyone. Now he is thriving and has outside tutoring we pay for.
- I have nothing against the good teachers and staff at public schools and the pressures they deal with. I just believe at the core it's a system that could be improved by moving BACK about 40 years. I and most people I know attended the public schools here in Madison, I graduated 1980 from La Follette High.
- One child currently attends Cherokee, child now in Edgewood attended Thoreau for two years. I want to clarify that we did not switch schools due to dissatisfaction with MMSD overall. As parents, we have chosen our current schools based on "best fit" for each child. Our oldest child has done and continues to do well in the MMSD system. We have been very pleased w/his education experience thus far. One final note, which is not on this survey -- but I would like to give my thoughts: As many parents have voiced the "new" number system (4, 3, 2, 1) currently being used on the report card in the middle school is frustrating and lacks meaning. I think this system should be discontinued.
- To show how serious we are about these challenges, we live in Madison, pay property taxes (to help Madison schools) and still chose to pay extra to send our daughter to Edgewood.
- Son is now a senior at Edgewood High
- Now that we've been in the new private school we've realized that the rigor of academic teaching is much better than what we had at Crestwood. While there were elements of satisfaction while at Crestwood (specially in K-2 and music/art) the 3-5

grade experience for my daughter was horrible (especially in hind-sight now) where she's struggled to catch-up to her peers in 6th grade. She lacked teaching of organizational skills, studying habits, book reports, states capitals, etc. (BASICS). Her grades at Crestwood were "great" so we did not know better. We regret having not made the move sooner.

- My husband was a MMSD student through 12th grade. He regrets the education he rec'd and is disgusted w/what's happening in his schools today. My parents pulled me from public school after bullying issues arose, no academic challenge and encouragement by school staff that I would hate my parents in middle school. I am a graduate of Edgewood High.
- I attended St. Dennis as a child then Madison La Follette High School, so I have personal experience with both private and public education. There seems to be a higher expectation of academic performance and effort in a private school, since they are smaller, the child is not overlooked in the crowd. We chose Madison Country Day School so our child would be in an environment where every teacher is passionate about their work, every subject is taught in the most effective method, and the close community would foster a love of learning and exploration into adulthood. We chose this private school for what it offered, not necessarily for what MMSD couldn't or didn't offer.
- Holy Cross only goes through 8th grade, at which point we have to explore other options. I would most likely choose a Virtual School over a public school at that time if we don't opt for Private.
- Our daughter was tested for a LD through the public school system. She was diagnosed by a doctor with ADD and dyslexia-- however she was not "far enough behind" to qualify for help. She was in 3rd grade reading at a pre-K level! How many children are slipping through the cracks at MMSD? Very disheartening.
- The Madison Public Schools have taken political correctness to such an extreme level that I do not feel comfortable entrusting my children to them. Christians are not given the same respect and appreciation as those in the minority. When children go on field trips and are taught about "mother earth" as if she is a God, that's out of line. When they teach sex ed using protection as the answer rather than opting to stay pure, I'm not comfortable. When an elementary school boy shows his private parts to a second grader on the playground, yet is not reprimanded, that's unacceptable. I've heard stories such as these for years now. I'm just thankful that we have the option of having our children attend a school with morals in line with our own. If we could not afford it, we would move to an outlying community rather than send our kids to MMSD. It's really sad how our schools have deteriorated because not only did I attend public school, but my father was a public school teacher in Madison for over 30 yrs. He agrees that the school system has lost its way in its attempt to cater to the minority and be politically correct. Very sad.
- There are parts of Eagle (class size, for example) that are difficult to replicate in the public schools. Some things can be replicated with success in the public schools, in my opinion. Eagle uses instructional material that is very engaging. The school also has high teacher expectations. There were 2 teachers at Van Hise who my children experienced that were incompetent, yet they remained employed. Although costly, foreign language should be required as soon as possible in elementary school.
- I would have loved to have my two daughters attend our neighborhood elementary school with the neighborhood children. However, both girls were reading at 3rd -4th grade level at the start of kindergarten. I visited the school and attended some evening meetings held by the district TAG coordinator. I was disappointed by the lack of resources available for TAG programming. My older daughter does attend high school in the district. At that level they are a sufficient number of advanced courses and AP course to challenge her, although she would like to see more options in the English Dept. Right now it is our plan to have our younger daughter attend public high school also.
- I'm happy to help, to discuss this further. Don't hesitate to call!
- Have you ever surveyed exiting High School seniors for suggestions on the high school they'd prefer?
- Expulsion of problem students; metal detectors; ending the anti-Christian atmosphere, other religions seem to be more acceptable?? And limited mainstreaming.

- I wouldn't consider sending my children to a Madison public school because having a religious aspect is important to me. Quite frankly, I don't support the notion of not celebrating holidays so as not to offend someone else. I also worry about the atmosphere in public schools concerning safety and bullying. Unfortunately, Madison Public Schools have never been and never will be an option.
- Although my daughter is only in sixth grade, I am concerned about the experience's I am hearing from other parents with MMSD as they look to transition their kids (8th graders) to either West or Memorial. There seems to be strong peer pressure from kids from Queen of Peace to go to Edgewood. Right now my daughter wants to go to Memorial but the recent lock-down/police incident is disturbing. I also heard from the wife of a Madison police officer saying to her niece, "If your parents weren't sending you to Edgewood, then I would." That is somewhat frightening. My hope is the change in the Superintendent is going to make positive changes, thank you.
- I attended Madison Public Schools as a youth, I am concerned with the changes that have occurred in recent years. Issues of overcrowding, violence, drugs, etc. have led us to conclude that Madison Public Schools are not a viable option at the present time.
- I much prefer public school for my children because I believe it best prepares them for life in American society. However, my younger daughter was developing social and self-esteem problems, and some behavior problems, when her academic needs weren't met and she was "punished" by peers and not supported by her teachers in her academic "difference."
- As first timers it was very disappointing that resources were not available to us to understand what attending Madison schools could have meant for our daughter -- in the end, Eastside made us feel welcomed and MMSD reinforced our concern that our daughter would be lost in the mix of a big school with a lot of kids... If someone could have disavowed us of the feeling and, through their actions, demonstrated an interest in having us attend the public schools we may have made a different decision.
- I find it very interesting the large number of MMSD teachers that send their children to private schools or live outside the district but teach in Madison. The quality of education isn't good enough for their own children but it should be for mine. Are they invested in our community or is it just a job! (Staff names) from Lafollette are prime examples. (Staff name) even coaches at (another district) but teaches at Lafollette. Maybe try to look at these simple things. The message is bad. Quality, Quality, Quality needs to be the focus and then success, success, success will happen.
- I think MMSD is excellent and has wonderful schools, but am in the Leopold district and concerned with safety, drugs and other children's behavior.
- We are concerned about safety, we feel MMSD teachers are not accountable; we feel the facilities are old; the schools are way too big and thus there is a reduced sense of community and no prayer or religious education offered
- Wingra has a strong program all around. 1) Team taught, mixed age classrooms; 2) Integrated curriculum; 3) Focus on whole child social and academic growth; 4) Small size 5-14 yr olds together; 5) Loving atmosphere; 6) Students are taught to take charge of their own learning; 7) No grades - internal motivation to learn; Strong all-school traditions
- Learn how to budget and then live within that budget
- MMSD is full of students with needs similar to our son's, and it is frustrating to see the lack of meaningful support for the population. Simply skipping a grade (or grades) is not a tenable solution, as it doesn't take into account the child's social/emotional development. If budgetary concerns were no object, a magnet school for G-T kids would be a fantastic solution. But working with our current situation, adding a G-T resource room that is truly "resourced" would help, as would adding a foreign language component to the elementary curriculum. Such a component would benefit all children, G-T or otherwise. We would love to be able to support our public schools with more than just our tax dollars, and it was a very difficult decision to remove our children from our local school. But the risk was just too great that their love of learning would wither on the vine if they sat in classrooms that didn't provide the challenge they crave and need in order to reach their full potential. MMSD does a marvelous job meeting the needs of ED/BD children, non-English speaking children, children with learning

disabilities and we would never argue that the needs of G-T children should be met at their expense. However, it is our hope that MMSD will find a way to give equal consideration to children who, often because of their "success" in school, are overlooked and underserved. Thanks very much for the opportunity to share our thoughts and experiences with you; I appreciate your effort to gather feedback and identify areas for improvement.

- We have a 7th grader, 4th grader and a kindergartener at Our Lady Queen of Peace. We do plan on having our children attend Memorial High school. I am wondering if you have a person in high school designated to assist students and parent of these students transition for parochial school to a public high school. If so could you please forward the information to the undersigned below, Thanks.
- My daughters went to public schools in Rice Lake before we move here. I am a public school teacher and have always been a strong supporter of public education. I was not impressed with what I saw at Jefferson. Too many red flags. I also toured John Muir. I had a much better impression of that school's overall atmosphere.
- We would love to see a CHARTER school for gifted learners similar to the ones in the Appleton school district. ALL students should be encouraged to perform to their maximum potential. We are lucky to be able to afford the tuition for private school at this time, but then are many families with extremely gifted children that can't and I wish the MMSD would be able to better accommodate them.
- We have two children - our son in 3rd grade has attended St. Dennis from Kindergarten on up thru 3rd (this year). Our daughter is a sophomore at Lafollette, after attending St. Dennis K-8. What a world of difference it has been to have a child in an MMSD school. Some good, more not so good.
- I believe we could save a lot of money in the schools if we'd stop bussing everyone back and forth - plus, some of the busses I saw pull-up at Midvale were only a quarter full - why waste all the \$ on huge busses that spew pollution all over town - and sit idling for 1/2 hour out front of school. Minneapolis finally got smart about bussing and went back to local schools - where kids could walk or bike. They didn't see significant change, over 25 years of integration. I know of Mom's in the Lincoln area who would love to volunteer in the classroom but don't have transportation to Midvale - they miss 3 yrs of being w/their child in school - also, how much are all those taxi cabs I see pull up in front of school everyday - plus for parents at special events? This is why my child goes to private - where we can walk - all 9 years.
- Thank you for seeking input from the parents within the school district with your recent survey. You are to be commended for making this effort, though I have little confidence that sharing my views will result in any substantive changes at MMSD. I apologize in advance for my cynicism and frustration on this topic, but since you asked: I do not send my kids to public school because I think the public school system in general is more interested in social engineering than in educating children. For example, an examination of the MMSD Equity Policy reveals an educational philosophy rooted in political correctness emphasizing "inclusion," "cultural diversity" and "social responsibility" (see liberal activism), and "eliminating gaps in access to academic achievement due to current or historic inequities." Historic inequities? Really? If you think you have to have one, shouldn't the goal of an "equity policy" be to treat people equally rather than fostering a culture of victim hood? -- Safety: I don't think my daughters would be safe in MMSD as I have read about rapes in the stairwell, violent assaults in the girls bathrooms, gang violence, drugs and even parents and adult siblings entering the school to assault certain students; Academics - the kids in our school routinely test 2 years ahead of the public schools academically and average over 80% in college placement and Values: MMSD's evidence based requirement (see evolution theory, taught as fact) is in direct conflict with our religious beliefs of faith-based Intelligent Design. I realize that most teachers are dedicated professionals who are trying to do the best job they can with limited resources, educating kids from vastly different social and economic circumstances. They are also required to provide services to students that private schools are not, so admittedly a direct comparison is probably not fair. Yet, our public schools are reflections of the community they serve and as a social and economic conservative living in Madison, I am realistic about my expectations, Thank you for seeking input, it's nice, at least, being asked.

- Thank you for taking the time for our input. I hope our legislators pass a school voucher program. A school voucher program would hopefully cause a paradigm shift in our school district to focus on academics and standards! (Not pay raises - free healthcare) The WES is too powerful -- need to focus on what benefits the students not teacher protection (pay raises/free healthcare/free dental - put the student first! Reduce teacher benefit packages put the money in public education not the teachers wallet! I cannot believe the incredible benefit packages provided to Madison public school teachers it is incredible especially in our current economic situation - reduce the free ride (health care that will save millions!!! Put kids first - no more tax increases - reduce benefits.
- Comments from MMSD teachers: 1) on a child pushing and hitting another child: "Oh let them be, they'll work it out. The child hurt was unable to respond to negotiate the situation. 2) on seeing a 4-year old unassisted: Oh, don't teach him that, if he already knows that, he'll just be bored in school. 3) on class size: My class had doubled in size since I started, there's no way I can spend time with every kid. The ones who have meltdown end up with getting attention. From a parent: we spent an hour and half on homework last night - we spend at least an our most nights and she is in 2nd grade - we don't have time for anything else.
- I didn't choose MMSD : I contacted Emerson, Franklin & Nuestro Mundo - they were not helpful to me nor enthusiastic of forthcoming about answering my questions, did not welcome me into the school and would not let me meet or observe teachers. I was really shocked that the schools assumed I would send my 5 yr old into a place I was not familiar or even welcomed. I did not have a good feeling, on the other hand, the private schools I visited had someone designated as "admissions counsel," and were very responsive and welcoming to parents. Thanks for conducting this survey. I appreciate the opportunity to provide some feedback on my experience (and lack thereof) with MMSD.
- I have two students at La Follette (9th & 12th graders). St. Dennis has a mix of people of different cultures, ethnic backgrounds and religions. Yet I've never heard my kids say anything negative about these differences until they get to high school. Once they get to high school they see the fights and negative language - culture shock. Then they want to steer clear of the very groups they had no problem with prior to high school. This is disappointing. Respect, spirituality, community service, teamwork are all as valuable as academics. These are tools people use, in the work world to be successful.
- Good luck with your attempt to improve the public schools. We wish you every success, and would love to go back if we thought the school could give our kids what they need.
- I cried when I received this letter. Thank you!! My husband and I chose for him to telecommute from Madison because of the school district's reputation. That was 10 years ago. I have a teaching certificate (K-12) in speech/language pathology and work in public schools in (another city) where the instruction is poor (low property taxes) and there isn't any busing. By 1st grade, we were dissatisfied with our daughters education here in Madison. She moved to Chavez when it opened and had such poor instruction (with the exception of 4th grade) that we questioned our commitment to the public education system on a yearly basis. She as learning so little - poor curriculum especially in math and poor instruction - that she was becoming increasingly frustrated and less engaged as each year went by. Unless a parent knew the right people to talk to and knew how to be a squeaky wheel, it was impossible to get TAG resource support. Her experience at Toki was even worse - poor instruction and a dangerous environment. We were still so committed to public education, however, that it wasn't until our son in 3rd grade was losing his interest in learning and our daughter began to bloom as an artist - due to her time spent sketching in slow-moving, boring classes - that it was time to join the bright flight. It was time to give our sons (one daughter wanted to stay with her friends) what they deserved - a challenging and safe educational environment where the emotional and social needs of gifted students are understood. Our sons have flourished. The old "repeat it eight times in different ways" is mind-numbing to gifted kids. They need to be give greater dept of material; be allowed to work at a quicker pace, and have their creative side feed to succeed. We mourned our departure from the public schools. We believe in them and what they should be to kids of all ability levels. I was very involved in the classroom and lead MSCR after



school clubs for years. I cried when we decided that the boys had to leave. Memorial has been good for my daughter so far so we intend to send our sons there when they enter high school. Please keep up the quality of the high schools and offer even more AP and Honors courses. Please re-introduce a TAG program that gives our bright students the challenge they deserve. A Charter School similar to Eagle would be wonderful. Charter Schools, in general would be wonderful. The bright flight here in Madison is significant. Curriculum, instruction and school population all need to be addressed. Thank you for the opportunity to provide input. Good luck with your attempt to improve the public schools. We wish you every success, and would love to go back if we thought the school could give our kids what they needed like the names of other parents who still have kids at Chavez who are discouraged and are considering private education. The exodus will continue unless something changes.

- The teachers don't have authority to discipline kids. Parents need to be more responsible for children. I heard the school (Kennedy) classes could not keep pets because of 1 or 2 kids with allergies. Taking care of a pet is a natural learning process for kids. Everyone was being punished due to 1 or 2 kids.
- The private school our daughter attends is very costly for us.. I think we may be under the average income level of most families there - yet we feel the cost is worth it to teach her a love of learning and processes that will benefit her future learning/problem solving.
- We want our children to have a strong sense of right, wrong and moral values that don't seem to exist so much in our society anymore. Some day they won't have mom and dad around to make sure they stick to those morals so with the help of our schools of choice, those values will be second nature to our children.
- If, school district and Teachers Union can't find a way to approve and fund Pre-K program there will be no reason to have Faith that things are going to improve. It is a litmus test. Leopold seems too big for an elementary school.
- We pulled our daughter out of Madison Schools mid-year. We found overall, the teaching staff were lazy and didn't truly care about the kids. (Staff name) admitted to me that she had known my daughter was being bullied for 3 months and never let me know. It was only when it got so bad, that I asked the teacher about it and then, she admitted it had been a major problem. All she did was offer to separate (student name) from this group of bullies in class, but it still continued at lunch, recess and music/art.
- Our regular high school is currently Memorial, we are looking to move in the next 2 years (our oldest is in 6th grade), so we can attend Verona or Middleton or even West High Schools. Because Memorial has a reputation of gangs, etc. so I don't want my kids attending, due to safety concerns.
- As the son of parents who were both public school teachers in Michigan, I did not hesitate to send my own daughter to Madison Public Schools. In fact, Madison's reputation for having a fine public school system is one of the reasons for moving here in the late 1990's. At that time I had the option of also sending her to Westside Christian School as well, but choose to give MMSD a chance. For three years she attend Glen Stephens Ele. The kindergarten and first grade experiences provided an adequate educational base, although it was evident that the curriculum was not challenging. Fortunately, I was able to supplement her school lessons with more challenging examples at home. It wasn't until she attended second grade that I truly became dissatisfied with Madison schools for a variety of reasons that I am happy to share with you. During registration, I always like to meet the new teacher and introduce myself. The year her teacher was not available. Despite numerous attempts to contact the teacher to get a supply list and find out where to meet on the first day of school, I received no responses. The day before school started, I finally learned from the front office that her teacher was scheduled to be on maternity leave, but they could not provide me with the name of the substitute or tell me where we needed to go to line up. On the first day of school, while other teachers were outside introducing themselves and showing the kids where to line up our daughter's teacher was nowhere to be found. After ten minutes and several inquiries to other teachers regarding the whereabouts of the substitute, a few of us parents were able to get into the school and found the classroom. Shortly afterward their teacher show up at the room and told us we needed to be outside. After another parent

explained that we were only there because there was no one outside providing direction for this class, she told us to head out and she would be out shortly. She came up just as the bell was ringing and other classes were proceeding in. Needless to say, this did not start us off on the right foot. The rest of the semester was very trying. It was obvious that our daughter was not being challenged by the class work. She would come home on Mondays with the entire week of math assignments and would complete the whole worksheet in less than ten minutes. She would tell us about the classroom being "very loud and confusing" and sometimes hard to do assignments because of "boys that didn't follow the class rules but the teacher didn't make them." The lack of order in the classroom became an issue which I brought up at the first Parent Teacher conference. (Staff name) said it was because she had some "mainstreamed students" that required additional attention so sometimes she didn't have time to monitor the behavior of the other children. She went on to tell me that my daughter had a problem with being impatient. This was surprising to me since no other teacher had ever observed that kind of behavior. When I asked her to provide an example she stated that our daughter would finish her class work before most of the other kids, but would have to wait to have it checked and she would grow impatient while she was helping others. She was not allowed to go on until the work was checked over and yet she was waiting for the teacher to explain the concepts again to other students. I asked if she could just check our daughter's work so she could move on, but (staff name) stated "It doesn't work like that and (student's name) will just need to learn patience." She seemed very unwilling to help the situation. There were other incidents like this that, while minor, made the first semester frustrating. And I know not to judge a school simply due to the actions of one teacher. However, already dissatisfied with the lack of challenging curriculum and the confusing experience I began considering other options. Other events that happened that same year at the school board and district levels helped me decide that perhaps the priorities of MMSD were not the best option for my family. These included: 1) The same week that Madison news stations were reporting a rise in Chicago based gang activity in the Madison Junior Highs, the Board was feverishly debating junk food and voting to ban vending machines from the schools. This really shows misplaced priorities. 2) Then came the news about a teacher at one of the middle schools who gave a mandatory writing assignment to the students to "write a letter of protest against the war in Iraq to a public official and demand an immediate withdrawal of US troops." Parents of the students were required to provide envelopes and postage, regardless if they agreed with this opinion. When the grandmother of a student whose parents were both proudly serving in the military objected to the use of public schools to promote a politically slanted agenda, her alternative suggestion of allowing students to write letters of encouragement to soldiers overseas was rejected. The Board backed the decision of the teacher to give a failing grade to any student who did not fulfill the assignment. If the purpose of the assignment was to write a letter the content should not have been dictated. 3) In December of that year, the 2nd and 3rd graders at Glen Stephens were presented with overviews of different religious festivals from around the world. I discovered this when I found a small piece of paper in my daughters backpack saying "(Student's name) Ramadan Thoughts." Having taught classes on comparative religions myself, I was concerned about the content of what was being taught. I contacted (staff name) who explained that this program was to expose children to major religious festivals from a cultural point of view. She explained that in addition to Ramadan, they were going to talk about others such as Diwali, Winter Solstice, and Kwanzaa. When I asked if they were going to talk about Christmas she said they were going to talk only about the Hispanic cultural traditions of "Feliz Navidad." When I pointed out that this was not providing "equal time" to Christianity, she explained that "children get enough exposure to that outside of school already." As with the example above, these kinds of decisions seem to be a bit inequitable. In addition to these examples there are many others I could cite about the MMSD spending taxpayer money in wasteful ways: on new buildings when some are not near capacity; on programs designed to promote social engineering rather than provide basic education; on continuing to promote failed reading and ESL programs which need to be revised; on taxi cabs for students that habitually miss the bus; and so many others. Is it any wonder that the Madison Schools fail the "No Child Left Behind" testing? It is not due to the fact that the test was "unfair because it was in English" as Mr. Rainwater tried to excuse. It is because MMSD is failing to spend the money on the basics and on programs with proven results. A call to civil

disobedience to overturn NCLB as Mr. Rainwater advocated is not the answer. Responsibility and accountability are the answer. This can be done while still "teaching to the whole child" as he suggests. Westside Christian School does "teach to the whole child," providing art, music, and physical education classes that are much more structured than those we encountered at Glen Stephens. Guest speakers and field trips are more frequent. Science and Art Fairs are held on alternating years. (Student name) has been able to participate in extracurricular music programs including strings, piano and band and sports programs (volleyball team, basketball team, cheerleading, track) much earlier than she could have in the MMSD programs. Her math and English skills were assessed when she started and she was able to move to the next higher level in each so she stays challenged and interested. (And she still maintains A's). Students are expected to be respectful to their teachers and their peers and they are held accountable for their actions -- as are the parents. There is cultural as well as socio-economic diversity within the student body with no repercussions or need of special programs to provide acceptance or inclusion to promote a safe learning environment. Most importantly, the average Westside student has consistently scored higher in standardized testing over the past several years than the average MMSD student. The most incredible thing is that all of this is accomplished at a much lower rate of spending per pupil. I understand that Madison prides itself on its self-proclaimed "social progressiveness" and that the school board policies tend to reflect the opinions of the vocal majority of the city. However, with the economy the way it is, continuing with programs that are not cost effective seems to be one of the reasons for people looking elsewhere for educational alternatives. In fact, I know of two families that followed our move from Glen Stephens to Westside the year after we switched. Again, having parents who were public school teachers, I understand that the vast majority of Madison school teachers are very passionate about their jobs and devoted to their students. Unfortunately, I just feel that MMSD has declined in quality since 1998. Every responsible parent wants the best education for this child. Therefore it was a sad, but not difficult decision to pull my daughter from the district and send her to private school. Before I was a parent, I gladly gave my taxes to support public education. I continue to gladly do so today because I feel education, more than entitlement programs, are the way to progress society. MMSD is welcome to my property taxes to educate the children of this city as the duly elected members of the school board deem necessary. However, unless massive changes are made back to the true focus of public education in the city, I will continue to willingly pay additional fee each year to send my own daughter to a school that provides high quality educational opportunities in a safe learning environment. Thank you for this opportunity to present my reasoning. I wish you success in your tenure as Superintendent.

- We have two grads of West High School and a sophomore currently enrolled. We are seriously considering private high school for our middle schooler. We have found West High to be too large to effectively assist our children in navigating and in advocating for them without persistent, strong investigation. I don't like it being that difficult. I don't like when principals and advisors don't return calls or are too busy to thoughtfully assist with problem-solving. I feel that my three children who are currently in or have graduated from West High generally under-achieved while there - not because they are/were poor students but because there was little adult encouragement to push themselves. There is no doubt West has some gifted teachers but there are others who seem less invested in being good adult role models and more interested in being "buddies."
- Thanks for taking the time to send this survey. Our main reason is Religious Education. Talking about high school, we were concerned about the number of students (Memorial High School) is too crowded. Also we heard about gang problems there. Thank you
- Kennedy. Too much money is spent for inferior education. School board members are not responsive to parent concerns unless it has reached the point of making them look bad in the press. Board members so not return e-mails or phone calls and are frequently rude to guests on the Board floor.
- I want my child to be in an environment among peers whose families value education. I am not confident that public schools put any resources into educating the bright and talented students. There does not seem to be any great path in these kids

with programs that are advance. Why doesn't Madison have charter schools like Verona does??? Or how about a school voucher program?

- We choose faith. The Madison schools have turned into a very generic environment. Thanks for asking. But, there really is nothing you could do to get us to change school, except maybe offer a more religious environment and curriculum.
- Ease up on the liberal ideas to make the environment better for all. If you are going to allow gay/lesbian clubs in the high schools than also allow Christian/Jewish/etc. clubs. Change the school district boundaries to make more sense from a distance traveled.
- We liked the MCDS community and classroom culture of character, respect for teachers & peers, personal responsibility, love for learning and community service. Public schools seem to tolerate so much terrible behavior.
- Unfortunately, the approach MMSD school district took with us was very impersonal. Examples, I still remember 6 years later, are in response to my concern about physically maneuvering the school - "well, we'll just redo IEP and transfer schools part way through the year". To me was unacceptable. Best way to explain feeling was at MMSD our child was FIRST a kid with a disability and being a kid was second. At QP our child is a kid first who happens to have a disability.
- Our 7th grade son, who currently attends Eagle School, is interested in moving into the public school for 8th grade. Our neighborhood middle school is Toki. If he could attend Jefferson instead and possibly take advantage of math at Memorial, we would consider moving him to the public school system. He attended Goretti before we moved him to Eagle in 5th grade to expose him to a broader curriculum, so this would be his first experience in a public school. We've submitted an internal transfer from in the hope that (student name) can attend Jefferson.
- My children fell through the cracks in MMSD despite our efforts to work constructively with teachers and staff. Some of the teachers were wonderful and skilled but didn't have enough support. My oldest was sent to the library by himself to do math with no supervision or systematic instruction, and this was after several months of groping around for some kind of appropriate curriculum. Every year it took until at least November for the classroom teacher to get some kind of enriched curricula in place for my kids. My children responded in different ways: oldest became depressed, middle became cantankerous, youngest was continually sick to his stomach. Schools maintained policy of not disclosing placement until week before school year started, so this always left months of lag time in assessing and implementing strategies every year. No continuity!!
- We have had some problems with public high schools getting info to private elementary schools. My kids will attend public high school, is I sincerely hope this problem will be corrected.
- If Dan Nerad would be interested in reading the first few chapters of Montessori - the science behind the genius by Lillard it would help him understand. We think MMSD is fantastic = just believe in Montessori methodology.
- Although we have had to sacrifice and take out loans for our youngest child to attend MCDS, it has been worth every cent. Even our older children with they would have had the opportunity to attend MCDS and have offered to help pay their siblings tuition once they graduate from college. They do not simply memorize dates; they understand methodologies, learn processes, and can do critical thinking and problem solving. Music and foreign language/cultures are important facets of the curriculum as are art and physical education. From PK on students are taught respect for their flag and nation, values, and skills of public speaking. Students are taught to respect each other, and they bond not just within their own class or grade level but from PK -12. They take pride in each other's accomplishments. The entire school community gathers at least twice a week to honor our country and share information. It is truly a wonderful and nurturing community.
- We chose private school for our children because of: smaller class size, more attention to each child, school environment safer. Right now they are in Montessori because we like how they teach children with hands on material. They manipulate beads etc to learn math, rather than just memorize. They are taught "grace & courtesy". They are taught to be self motivated and self discipline. They have freedom to move around and choose lessons. In the future we will be moving our children to Madison Country Day. That will be because of: smaller class size, attention to child, environment but also

because of curricular. They teach foreign language at a young age also piano. We will have access to some great art, gym & science equipment as well. I also believe that prep schools prepare the child better for college. Also, I worry if my child has trouble in a subject he will be streamlined into a "slower" class, of the rest of his school career, instead of given the opportunity to excel and be challenged.

- Teachers in special education were so busy dealing with behavior issues or just babysitting kids that my child's learning needs were not being addressed. She was able to learn but in the environment she was in was only learning how to behave badly and feel badly about herself. She was unable to read by end of 2nd grade.
- The Madison High Schools are too large. With such large populations, come too many problems with safety, gangs, too large class size etc.
- My son who is in college now and our older daughter is a senior in High School has never attended a public school. More black and white decisions and less hippy attitude. Much more structure for learning and less babysitting needs to take place in the Madison Schools.
- The main reason for my choosing a Catholic school was the religious education moral development aspect. My husband and I attended Catholic schools while my daughters attended Blessed Sac, Edgewood High School which does a great deal of promoting and recruiting. West High did very little to promote their school. They offer an orientation for parents and this is it. MMSD must do a better job in promoting what they have to offer. I am a realtor and many of my clients request Middleton Schools or surrounding areas. They specifically will state to me "not" Madison public schools. That say and test scores available on-line. My response is let's look at houses and then also schedule a tour at a few different schools. The principals and secretaries, along with students should be prepared, welcoming and willing to offer a tour and sell their school to prospective families. My experience is they do not readily embrace this concept and don't always put their best foot forward. Marketing and promoting is vital to MMSD. You have much to offer.
- The teachers and staff at Blessed have gone above and beyond to help us get our daughter caught up. Now in 3rd grade she is performing at a 4-5 grade level in reading and math. While she was at Leopold, she was lost in the crowd and would definitely not be doing as well as she is now had we not made the decision to move her.
- I don't know how to fix changing demographics, but educated/affluent families are fleeing the Madison Schools. Thankfully, we can afford private school, but if that were to change, we'd leave Madison. Frankly, it offends me to spend as much as I do on property taxes, yet still have to shell out 20,000 a year on private education.
- For us, as a family, it came down to religious upbringing and the fact that our children could all be at the same school. MMSD also doesn't offer a \$K program. Our children will very likely attend West.
- Start hiring non union teachers, use merit pay, vouchers and phonics, and I would send my support to you. It won't happen in my kids' lifetimes. PS We attended Madison Public schools - my husband has a degree in elem education - you can't fool us.
- Please feel free to call me if it is possible to have my children attend Hamilton next year. They will be in 6 & 8.
- I am amazed to be asked !! Congratulations on a very good idea. You must be able to remove bad teachers, personnel who are jaded teaching so long they don't care anymore. This as simple as students not being expected to pick up their own garbage from K up because "that's the janitor's job" teach the wrong lessons to young minds. Lack of personal responsibility. This misdirection is repeated many times over K-12.

## 2. Open Enrollment Leaver

**Your reason(s) for transferring to another district was/were (check as many as apply to your decision):**

**The school has curricular programs which don't exist in our school of residence or there was dissatisfaction with the curricular programs in the school of residence. If you checked this item, please identify what program(s) in the requested school/district influenced your choice:**

- The school our children were supposed to go is not an environment we wanted our children in.
- Do not like the 4-block system
- Leopold has serious issues and felt more comfortable with smaller school.
- Have better special education department. Works on what happens when you get out of school, ex. Money, job, housing, cooking.
- The high school he will be attending has a strong music and drama program with a good reputation. He wants that experience. The strings program has a year earlier start - 4th grade.
- The middle school offered an advanced curriculum in math and was able to challenge him better in all subjects.
- Special Ed
- Too many kids in a class due to job cutbacks; other school district has more to offer in the classroom, field trips and just making learning fun and exciting. Verona School District has a great community feel!
- Gifted and talented receives 1/100 the attention of special needs.
- Advanced math and Spanish
- Virtual School
- Academic curriculum, dual-enrollment classes
- father attended this district
- See #4 below
- To homeschool
- Too much time wasted in trade classrooms/school day
- Bilingual

**Your reason(s) for transferring to another district was/were (check as many as apply to your decision):**

**Other: (Please identify the other reason(s) below.)**

- Our child never attended Madison Schools before Open Enrollment, only Catholic schools and we wanted to stay in a smaller school system
- Our resident school is Leopold. It is too crowded. We experienced Leopold with our 1st child and not pleased with the chaos of being over-crowdedness and the atmosphere in the classroom.
- I work for the school district in which my children attend.
- Moved in district, my children liked attending. When moved out of district my children wanted to attend out of district school, because they are familiar and like the school
- Older brother was going to Waunakee thru earlier open-enrollment
- My ex-wife did not want our child to attend La Follette High
- The attitude of the principal at (MMSD school). She is RUDE!!
- Violence, gangs, drugs and alcohol
- The number of police calls/reports at La Follette High

- I volunteered in my son's kindergarten class at Glendale and witnessed 5 yr olds talking about "humping" and THEY KNEW WHAT IT MEANT!!!
- Safety, drugs and negative peer pressure
- We moved back into the McFarland School Dist. in August.
- Smaller size classes (for high school); I teach at the school my child attends; it is halfway between my house and his dad's house
- We have good friends at Stoner Prairie.
- I received no help from the school staff regarding my concerns.
- I work in another district and wanted matching schedules for breaks etc.
- The school has been out-of-control for a long time
- Wanted a smaller school (Monona Grove vs. LaFollette)
- Had a negative experience at the Madison school, also no homework, over-crowded classroom; the child, my grandson, was moving in with me (his guardian) and the change to a new Madison school was too stressful, with other changes going on at the same time.
- Older sibling attends Verona Schools - we attend church in Verona too and has more acquaintances in Verona.
- Our son is on the autism spectrum and requires special education programming. His mom is a special education teacher at (MMSD school). In fairness to both it was decided that transferring to Monona Grove High School was the best choice.
- School too close to mall - concerned over student leaving campus too much.
- Boredom due to a lack of advanced classes at the middle school level, therefore the slow pace at which learning occurred. Also, the environment in the classroom had become very stressful because of behavior problems.
- Madison school was just way too big of a school. Too many kids under one roof.
- Negative peer pressure; concern that my children would "get lost" in a large classroom academically. Didn't want our children indoctrinated with an agenda that we do not hold.
- My son had a very difficult year in grade 2 at Elvehjem, several teacher changes in one year - and I work at (another school district) (over 20 years)
- I believe my kids are receiving a better opportunity for their education. My daughter spent one semester at Glendale and it was a nightmare.
- Not discipline kids enough is a huge issue. Disruptive kids need to get out of the classroom and be punished instead of getting lollipops in the office.
- Negative peer influence, behavior in the classroom was deplorable.
- Air system allergies/dust
- I know what my child is learning and can apply it to her daily life. We can design a school schedule that fits our family schedule. Better teachers who provide individual assistance. A curriculum that builds upon the past year as it challenges the student.
- School staff are not welcoming to the international student with high score and desire to obtain high academic level of education.
- The grade school, Glendale, that my oldest son attended was very unsatisfactory. As a result, I pulled him and all my other children from that school and stayed with (another school district) in subsequent years.
- Particularly Sennett and LaFollette High School.
- Their reading program
- Parents felt comfortable at the open house and teacher & staff projected respect and concern for all children.
- Emerson school was very troubled at the time of our transfer, and we were not allowed to transfer to any other MMSD school.

**Were there specific things you were dissatisfied within the Madison Metropolitan School District which caused you to apply to a different district?**

**If yes, please identify the specifics below:**

- I didn't like the shared grade rooms like 2nd & 3rd graders in one classroom
- We want to add or religion in our home schooling, and we felt our child could excel at his own pace, and study without distractions from the everyday occurrences in a public school.
- Concerns regarding fights and police being at the school.
- Too crowded !
- Ability to interact with teachers. The teachers not checking emails, voice mails, etc.
- Black kids got better bussing. Ex. For evening programs a bus went to the south side to get kids and parents. Ex. After school math programs: bus to Simpson St. but not to my white neighborhood.
- I like the smaller town atmosphere of Verona over the big city atmosphere of MMSD
- Principal at (MMSD school) at the time plus additional learning help not available then.
- Safety, drugs, gangs; unsafe for my child.
- Long-term concern with violence issues at Sennett and La Follette.
- The barrage you have to go through when trying to resolve issues.
- Too many to list
- Size of Leopold; too big; 2) above average/too high low socio-economic student body
- Could not deal with my child's disability. Could not keep her safe.
- Wanted a smaller school (Monona Grove vs. LaFollette)
- Lack of discipline of students who misbehave. "Bad" Madison schools, compared to other schools outside of Madison!
- No Christmas programs or Easter. Over-crowding, lack of supervision, too many days off, the pushing of a gay agenda even in elementary school.
- We were not pleased with curriculum that was designed for kindergarten level - very weak considering it is an all day program.
- Student teacher ratio as well as funding for materials for teachers and students not sufficient.
- Madison school was just way to big of a school. Too many kids under one roof.
- Liberal philosophy (attempting to ban the Pledge of Allegiance, etc.)
- My son had a very difficult year in grade 2 at Elvehjem, several teacher changes in one year - and I work at (another school district) (over 20 years)
- The environment (gangs, drugs, sex) at Madison East.
- Because ours was a high school situation. The size of the school our child was attending was a concern, as was a lack of attention, in part due to the large student body.
- Negative teacher attitude, poor communication, unwillingness to work with parents.
- Bullying of my child by entire school and teachers that principal and (administrator name) refused to address; (2) Refusal of teachers to teach my child. They also filled out her work themselves rather than teach her - I have the documents. Again, principal and (administrator name) refused to address; (3) Racism of teachers at middle and high school levels. Elementary school was excellent.



- Overcrowding, disruptive kids not getting sent out of class or punished for bad behavior. My children are becoming the minority. No money in schools. All the fun stuff is being taken away.
- Inappropriate language, violence and negative environment.
- Unwillingness to provide advanced math.
- We were not pleased with curriculum that was designed for kindergarten level - very weak considering it is an all day program.
- West High School -- poor choice of classes, complete understanding of students needs by school office.
- He wasn't being taught at grade level. He was having lunch stolen daily. The principal at the time told me my son should be grateful he has lunch! Nothing said to child stealing lunch! My son was being hit on school grounds and bus.
- Various statistical data shows Frank Allis Ele. and Sennett Middle schools are below-average; ranked on the bottom of County and State School Rankings. Monona Grove School District ranks much higher and overall produces more proficient and advanced scores in all areas.
- Problems with teaching style of daughters teacher and anxiety with my daughter...school psychologist was NOT helpful and principle unwilling to transfer student out of class.
- Our son is a very bright student but is not motivated to do well in school and needs additional attention and guidance to perform. The atmosphere at Memorial, with so many students and many of them needing more help than our son, left our son at a very high risk of falling through the cracks (which he did). Waunakee HS, with it's fewer students (half of that at Memorial) and block system afforded the teachers the opportunity to adjust their teaching style to accommodate our son's learning style.
- bullying happening to my son.
- Not being open to placing my children in higher grades for certain subjects; unremarkable school performance; negative social issues not adequately addressed; district caring more about meeting the desires of the teacher's union, than doing what is best for the students; limiting options for education in order to keep tax dollars in the district
- In the nine years, the poverty level in the district increased so dramatically that it truly affected what was offered to the students. Behavioral problems and inappropriate behaviors become "the norm" that the poor teachers had to deal with, which means less focus on learning and positive environment. I grew up and my husband in Madison Public Schools, so when my son brought up the idea of possible open enrollment, I was shocked - until - I set up a personal appointment 2 weeks in advance at both West High and Verona. The Verona counselor took the time with us, personally gave us a tour, answered questions, did have to run off for a school situation, but then returned. When I went to West we were given a name tag, a stack of papers and were told to go walk around and "maybe we can get a counselor for a few minutes". Even though we had an appointment well in advance. The staff didn't really seem interested in whether or not my child/family came and I figured if they treat us this way now, what will happen to my kids(s) when they need help? I chose to enroll my kids in schools where the overall numbers are smaller so they feel more "family" like. The unfortunate result of being raised in poverty are not seen as much either. I'm all for diversity, but it seems my kids were getting the wrong impression because so many of the people-of-color were poor and were being raised by young parents (alot of neglect).
- Violence & negative reports on Toki & Memorial

**Please provide any additional comments/suggestions below or attach an additional sheet:**

- My daughter was concerned about the size of Memorial and worried about being in the same school as some of the peers she knew previously. We tried Mt. Horeb, but found that the lack of racial diversity was more of a problem. She also found

she missed her friends from Spring Harbor who are now attending Memorial. I have been very pleased with the services provided at Memorial to help my daughter in this transition.

- K-2nd grade @ Glenn Stephens
- The one other complaint I have is, MMSD policy on racial balance in the school! Because of this policy open enrollment is not really open. Even children who are home schooled and not physically in the school can't attend a Virtual School of their choice. If there is to truly be open enrollment then it should be open to all who would like to use this policy. Also it would be nice to see MMSD open a Virtual Online School.
- We were very happy when we built our home in the MMSD. When it came time for kindergarten, the over-crowded issue was already there. We moved our child and subsequent children to a private school (after K). My oldest daughter transferred to Cherokee at the start of 7th grade. Cherokee has been fine for her although it is ROUGH. Frankly, I don't want to send my other kids there. My other daughter transferred to Verona at the start of this school year. She needs extra help in math which is mainly why we transferred. I could not let her go to Leopold. Verona has been wonderful for her. My oldest starts high school in the fall, and is really looking forward to that.
- I have a blended family. I brought three children into my current marriage and my wife brought four. We are zoned for Elvehjem/Sennett/La Follette. My three children attended St. Dennis School. The oldest now attends Monona Grove High. Three of my wife's children are school age. Two attend La Follette and one attends Elvehjem. Our major comparison is at the high school level. Thus far, we wish we had enrolled all three of our high schoolers at Monona Grove High School instead of LaFollette. Our experience has shown that the teachers at LaFollette have far less control over their classrooms and the academic standards are lower. Our LaFollette children are not challenged in class. They rarely have homework and it is often accepted late. They also watch a lot of movies in class. Our Monona Grove student always has homework and has to study to maintain her grades. The teachers appear to be more organized and have more control over their classrooms. The administration also has far more control over the school as well. I would welcome the opportunity to share more details with you if you are serious about improving the conditions at LaFollette High School.
- I went to the Madison Police Dept. and read the police reports for La Follette, Edgewood, McFarland and Monona Grove. I was pleased with the location of Monona and I felt it was a much safer environment.
- I really think you should clean-up your school, Madison is beautiful but just to know that my child was going to attend La Follette it scares me, so I finally made choice to pay to attend McFarland.
- My other kids have attended
- Build another elementary in Fitchburg! What happened a few years back with Leopold Site 2nd School voted down, and then less than 1 year later a brand new school built on the affluent West side... voted yes, what a shame. 2) K-5 schools with more than 600 kids is too big, too intimidating (and potentially unsafe) for 5 or 6 year olds). At least split Leopold and another school as grades K-2, 3-5. 3) 4K -- yes, yes, yes! I hope it happens!
- Had attended Monona from 1st to 4th grade, then moved to Madison for 5th grade. Tried Madison school for short time, attended 5th grade in Monona
- He attended Blackhawk
- For all the money spent on public education, they sure have terrible public schools!
- We love our Wisconsin Virtual K12 Academy. My son excels in it, and is very much socialized. ...unfortunately, we never hear any good things about the MMSD. Only awful stories and disappointment.
- Also have three daughters who have either graduated from or attend MMSD schools. Madison needs to do more to serve advanced students prior to high school. More also needs to be done to improve the learning environment in the classroom.
- I attended Madison Schools K-12 - good experience, mostly good teachers, etc! Education prepared me for college.
- Both our children attend school out of district and we are pleased with the results. They also have friends within MMSD. They both attended parochial schools through 6th grade and we felt that Waunakee was the best answer to our needs.

- Boomerangs didn't work.
- My older girls are in Madison schools. Memorial is pretty good, Toki needs major improvements. I don't want my younger sons ending up there. So many things have been taken away because of no funds and many families can't afford trips therefore no one gets to go. My high school student came from Toki and is struggling and she was an Honor student at Toki, but doesn't feel Toki prepared her at all! Food is awful in Madison, please get healthier food. I feel great about Verona School District and I want to feel that way about Madison but at this time I can't. We are looking at moving into another school district because of all the Madison problems. I've lived in Madison my whole life and never thought I would leave it because of the schools.
- For years MMSD has neglected high achieving kids which has led to a mass exodus out of Madison to Middleton, Waunakee and Verona. If not for open enrollment we would have simply moved away.
- West High School: very poor education and very low teachers qualification in MMSD. Discrimination based on heritage (feeling people)
- My oldest 3 children attended MMSD - one did well - two did not. When my 4th child was in 2nd grade at Glendale, he started falling behind. He was also being hit and having his lunch stolen daily. I complained to the principal who replied that he had a hard enough time making sure the kids at Glendale had breakfast and school supplies. (I mistakenly thought he was there to make sure they had an education). He also said I should tell my son that he was fortunate to have a lunch -- other kids were not so lucky. (I mistakenly thought he would address the child who was stealing). I pulled my son from Glendale and put him in private school - 2nd grade. He struggled for a year and then excelled. I then enrolled my two younger children in private school then switched all to Monona Grove. Of the three younger kids, one graduates from college in 13 weeks as a Mechanical Engineer, one is a freshman at UW Platteville as a Mechanical Engineer and one intends on becoming a Cardiologist.
- My son is now registered with the DPI back in Madison district as a full time homeschooler. The online school was not a pleasing experience regardless of district.
- Bureaucracy, WEAC, and greed over tax dollars, are what keep Madison schools from being the very best they can be. I have high hopes for broad and positive changes with the new superintendent.
- There are a lot of sexual assaults and other sex crimes at Madison West & Memorial and it seems that the district spends a lot of resources covering it up instead of fixing the unsafe environment.

### 3. Open Enrollment Enterer

**Your reason(s) for transferring into the Madison Metropolitan School District was/were (check as many as apply to your decision):**

**The school has curricular programs which don't exist in our school of residence or dissatisfaction with a curricular program in our school of residence. If you checked this item, please identify what program(s) in the Madison Metropolitan School District influenced your choice:**

- When our son left Lodi School District as a first grader - they were using direct instruction reading for all primary students -- BAD
- Direct Instruction Reading program at Lapham Elementary, K-2 elementary program, integration of secondary alternative students (AERO)
- Smaller classroom SAGE Program

- The Science Program at LaFollette H.S. appeared much more rigorous and accessible for advanced learning than the other Madison High School and of our home school district. My older daughter (LaFollette 2007) has felt very well prepared in the sciences at Brown University. She has been very competitive with students from around the world coming from very elitist private prep schools etc.
- He walks to Daycare! (Student name) is in IEP classes and has done a wonderful job. He also loves his teacher.
- I work in Madison and he would have been alone after school for hours - dangerously so. Also because we have an IEP - consistency was extremely important and was too risky for his future to disrupt.
- Spring Harbor Middle School
- (Student name) has done so well in his programs, and I'm extremely happy w/his progress. All IEP programs.
- People Program
- People Program

**Your reason(s) for transferring into the Madison Metropolitan School District was/were (check as many as apply to your decision):**

**Other: (Please identify the other reason(s) below.)**

- Also- Lodi High School has Block Scheduling. My older son went through the system and learned little - I disagree philosophically with 4 -block - produces mediocrity.
- Lapham has excellent staff, including teachers, aids and support staff. (Administrator) is an excellent principal with superior leadership and communication skills.
- Child start at MMSD from start of her school and has a lot friends. Did not want her to get any emotion separation especially she did when we moved away from family.
- I teach in MMSD. But I am very disappointed that my son was not allowed to attend my school (Midvale)
- Child started at MMSD from pre-school has all his friends and I did not want him to get through emotion separation especially he did that before when we moved away from our family.
- Child start school with MMSD and she has lots of friends and I did not want for her to get emotion separation after we moved away from our family especially she is closer to her friends.
- School diversity
- Block system - Fabulous! My oldest daughter took 7 years of classes of science at La Follette which she could not have done in a regular school schedule. Also, much less wasted time with Block!
- As a single parent working in Madison it is not feasible to have my daughter in a different school district. (We are both very happy with the school she is attending as well.
- Our main reason for enrolling our daughter in the MMSD vs. the Lake Mills district was the diversity of the Madison Schools - Very important to us.
- The new school district was/is not racially integrated and he was petrified to attend an all-white school as an African-American
- Spring Harbor is an amazing middle school I like the small community, the aware and caring teachers, the environmental awareness and the hands on/active learning...just to name a few!
- When asked he said he wanted to stay at Kennedy.
- Ethnic Diversity
- Ethnic Diversity

- We wanted our children to attend a school with greater racial diversity
- We were concerned that our child did not have the same academic rigor as those from Middleton and would be at a disadvantage, especially with regard to math preparations.

**Please provide any additional comments/suggestions below or attach an additional sheet.**

- West High School is an additional reason for the switch -- I only switched my son because he would go there. I teach at West and believe the large diverse school environment is best for my boy. Small schools smother some kids. I like big schools
- Please consider allowing children of employees to automatically attend the employees' school.
- After 2 years at Kennedy (student name) has improved so much! He enjoys going to Kennedy and his father and I are asking again next year for the boys to go to open enrollment again to Kennedy.
- We have been very pleased with MMSD. We appreciate the availability of this program. Hopefully soon we'll once again be living in the MMSD and it will be much appreciated that our daughter can continue at the same school.
- I am SO grateful for the opportunity to leave my son in his school -- to have done otherwise would surely have had a detrimental effect.
- Thank you for this opportunity
- (Student name) has a very difficult time dealing with changes, as a family we felt he'd have a better chance and year in school if we kept him at Kennedy.

#### 4. Home Based

**Your reason(s) for choosing a home-based education option was/were (check as many as apply to your decision):**

**Dissatisfaction with curricular programs at other schools. If you checked this item, please identify what program(s) in the school/district influenced your choice:**

- My children wanted more challenging course material
- Lack of challenging English, social studies, language at middle school. Lack of adequately trained/prepared teachers in these areas.
- We feel our children can work at a pace that is set at their rate not at school's pace.
- Concern about safety & negative peer pressure and curricular emphasis on unproven theories such as global warming, Darwinian evolution.
- Traditional Guru deadens enthusiasm for learning
- ESL inclusion in primary grades - neighbors complained how it slowed down entire class. Better to each ESL separately at first to help all students; 2) Sex ed. vocal. in kindergarten on up. 5-year olds don't need what is taught unless it's already part of their family or neighborhood life; 3) Soc. studies in lower elementary - boring. Little kids love world history - teach it!
- Also our children grow-up bilingually (German) and foreign languages are not introduced until very late.
- Lack of school choice and programming for TAG students within the district. Please offer an academically challenging Charter School.
- Negative peer pressure

- Not enough opportunities for gifted or enough challenging curriculum.
- Lack of TAG program - Son was in TAG at Midvale in K - but it was cut for 1st grade and he had no outlet - was in the same class everyday with no program for him - he was bored.
- Lack of classic education in language, reading, mathematics and history.
- Negative Peer pressure
- We had adopted children at age 10 and placed them in the public school setting in Madison. They were labeled as special needs children, but at no time were they given the opportunity to improve or expand their knowledge base. As long as the school system was concerned they could stay at 1st grade level through high school. Example - given a science project to name the bones of the body. They were only expected to learn and know ribs, skull & femur. They had the ability to learn more but that was all that was expected of them. They were frustrated with not getting the same work as the other kids.

**Your reason(s) for choosing a home-based education option was/were (check as many as apply to your decision):**

**Other: (Please identify the other reason(s) below.)**

- The safety of our children. Every time I visited the schools, doors weren't locked, no one asked me to go to the office. I had the freedom to walk around the school and was able to walk in every door. This was a big concern for us due to our children being adopted and biological parents knowing where we are. I didn't seem safe for our kids.
- I did not get understanding asking to allow my son get dressed after he ate his lunch, I did not get an option of skipping outside play when my son was not quite well.
- Lack of challenges, growing indifference at West High to high-achievers. Lack of flexibility. Inability to accommodate gifted students.
- For our child with autism - to guarantee a consistent, well-trained aide - we were fortunate to mostly home school him while also accessing some classes with our own aide.
- Morality of kids today. Curriculum based on my child's needs.
- Bullying was not dealt with appropriately/at all
- My 4th grade daughter was terrified to go to school and after going through all the proper channels (principal, assistant superintendent, superintendent and school board) without any results, we decided to home school.
- Sex ed curriculum; evidence (decades ago) that teachers were being told to cover up portions of pro-homosexual material, i.e. they were told not to be honest with parents. I've home schooled in Madison for 22 years.
- Anti-family curriculum, anti-life sex education, i.e. things that undermine our Roman Catholic faith.
- See above
- We began home schooling before moving to Madison.
- Very little foreign language instruction
- Lack of challenging curriculum.
- At the time many kids in the school were bused from way across town and these kids seemed to be destructive and high need so classrooms were small but having lots of needs.
- We tried Falk for 2007-2008 school year great Spec Ed services!!!! But my child missed 30 days of school for health issues - surgeries-hospitalization. Home based more appropriate.
- TAG - see above and a bad experience with another teacher who verbally criticized my child in class after we pulled our child out of school, two teachers outside of school told us we made the right decision and apologized for the persistent bad behavior of this art teacher toward our child.

- Lack of morals and Christian ethics and lack of discipline.
- We find the public system bland, and don't agree with TV in the class.
- My child was a "lately" enrolled student and ended up in a "special needs" and overflow class. She was bored, she said, because all the material taught in 2nd grade was the same stuff we taught her in first grade. In fact, the math and the reading were much lower.
- Of my six children, some did fine in the school system and others were too distractible and had their learning retarded by the social aspects. These latter ones went into "shut down mode" and it was only through home schooling for a period of time that we could get them "back on board".
- Lack of teaching, unwillingness to progress and challenge students, too much time spent on movies, parties and games
- The other concern we had was the lack of instruction time for all kids involved (school wide). There were far too many movies - not related educationally and too many parties and games. The movies, parties and games would have been fine if they pertained to actual school assignments, but unfortunately it was just playtime.

**Were there specific things you were dissatisfied within the Madison Metropolitan School District which caused you to choose to home school your child(ren)?**

**If yes, please identify the specifics below:**

- The safety of our children. Every time I visited the schools, doors weren't locked, no one asked me to go to the office. I had the freedom to walk around the school and was able to walk in every door. This was a big concern for us due to our children being adopted and biological parents knowing where we are. It didn't seem safe for our kids.
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- We began home schooling before moving to Madison.
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- We find the public system bland, and don't agree with TV in the class.
- My child was a "lately" enrolled student and ended up in a "special needs" and overflow class. She was bored, she said, because all the material taught in 2nd grade was the same stuff we taught her in first grade. In fact, the math and the reading were much lower.
- Of my six children, some did fine in the school system and others were too distractible and had their learning retarded by the social aspects. These latter ones went into "shut down mode" and it was only through home schooling for a period of time that we could get them "back on board".
- Lack of teaching, unwillingness to progress and challenge students, too much time spent on movies, parties and games

**Please provide any additional comments/suggestions below or attach an additional sheet:**

- Want info on taking 2 classes
- I would like to see more help with curriculum, e.g. sample tests, work sheets, etc. We'd like to return to the MMSD schools permanently. In general, I would like to draw your attention that it's not hygienic and not healthy to make kids (elementary and middle school) in Van Hise to eat their lunch fully dressed. Since school attendance is required once temperature is normal, kids come to school not fully recovered from colds. Allowing them optionally skip playing outside would help get their noses at least clear sooner and stop spreading germs.
- Planning to apply for the option of taking two classes. I don't see why a student's needs to be based at one school -- it would be great to be able to take one or two classes at one (or more) virtual schools, a class at MATC or UW, a class or two at the high school through the past - the attendance option. Our 12 year old, for example would probably enjoy/thrive in a college-level computer science class, next year, must have calculus at challenging high school or science, is ready for 2nd year high school Spanish, but would be in 8th grade English. So how do we find all of that in one building? I believe there should be more independent - study options within MMSD schools. Most classes follow a very strict model, that is not based on what a student wants to learn at all. If there were independent-study options for credit at MMSD schools, I, as a student, would seriously consider attending my local high school. Want info on taking 2 classes.
- Yes, grades 1-3, 5 (had a great teacher - staff name), 1/2 of 6th grade, 1st semester freshman year (we kept trying to get her back in!) she preferred home schooling while also taking 2 classes semester. We would like to applaud the school district for being flexible. We were lucky that our home situation also allowed for this flexibility. We would have loved to, at times, had our children taken more than 2 classes/semester as homeschooler - this would have been desired by them, Thank you again.
- Info on taking classes
- I was very disappointed in every meeting and phone call I made when I was trying to express my concerns about my daughter's fear of going to school and my children's safety while there. Every time the phone rang while they were at school terrified me because I thought it may be a call saying my daughter was injured by one of the unruly, rude children she attended school next to. If that was not bad enough, every class, every day was interrupted by these children and every child's education was suffering as a result because they were a full-time job in themselves. (Superintendent) never even had the courtesy to contact me and neither did any of the school board members. The Assistant Superintendent refused to talk to me when I introduced myself to her at a school event. The principal, well that could take up several pages alone.



She is not fit to be working in schools. When we realized that no one found there to be any need to be concerned over safety issues, we decided that we no longer were willing to risk our children's lives by sending them to public school. Since we began home schooling, my son feels like he is getting an education, my daughter no longer has fear in her eyes and my youngest can finally read because I give her the help she needs.

- If attending one class at the high school would qualify an otherwise totally home schooled student to be on sports teams (including varsity teams if they have the skill to make the team) that would be very tempting to a number of home-schoolers. That would be even more tempting if the one class could be any class including music or shop classes.
- Resource Centers; State Law -funding formula/resident not enrolled (See Washington State)
- Different MMSD school- would be up to the student.
- If you do go with an online school district model, please make it flexible. Parents want to be able to school at different hours, and even days, than the traditional school schedule. Also, please include curricular options that allow for advancement or remediation, depending on a child's needs. If you are concerned about calling parents "teachers" to avoid lawsuits, at least come up with a better title than WIVA's learning coach." Even "home Tutor" would be better, or just "tutor." Publish curricular choices on Web so parents know before applying for enrollment. Good lower elementary world history program - Story of the World by Susan Wise Bauer. It's a 4-year program, covers many ethnic groups and religions and is chronological. It could be for 1st-4th or 2nd-5th. Thanks for asking for our input! I hope you get lots of helpful info to help you improve MMSD schools!
- Like more info
- Unfortunately we have not been impressed by the quality of Online classes that our friends have taken using this option (we're in the West HS district. If the MMSD schools were less controlled institution and more of an open resource, we would probably use that resource as part of our children's education. As it is, we're happier with using our own teaching, home school coop classes, private art/music, UW-extension, MATC, the university and the public library. We do very much appreciate what MMSD offers families that can't or don't want to make the lifestyle commitment that home schooling requires. Thanks for all the work you do.
- Online school yes, but possible issue due to bilingual education.
- My daughter had whooping cough in Oct. 2005 - was failing her freshman year at East High School. I wasn't impressed with teachers attitudes -- her grades are better home schooled than regular high school. My son attends Memorial (better than Middleton - his previous school district.)
- Child is currently enrolled in a private Online high school and is also taking one class at an MMSD high school @ LaFollette. We are certainly not anti-public school, but our child is obviously much happier learning at home. I have noticed that Sennett Middle School manages to create a sense of community, while LaFollette's mood is much less congenial. Not sure if that contributed or not. Thanks for asking for feedback. It was a difficult decision for us. I assume that many of the hard-core home schoolers won't bother to respond.
- My decision to home school has nothing to do with the quality of Madison Schools. In fact, I've heard a number of positive comments regarding Madison Schools.
- I truly believe in choice and options for schools in the public system. Only have Falk as an option because my children are Spec Ed/IEP's is unfair/discriminatory. I plan to try to utilize open enrollment again and I plead with MMSD to not deny my children this public school opportunity. Thank you, please feel free to contact me.
- Also, if you really want to understand a broad range of reasons people home school, check out Creative home schooling: A Resource Guide for Smart Families by Lisa Rivero. I'm too busy to talk on the phone. If, after emailing you have questions you feel would be best answered on the phone or in person we can arrange for that.

- My son's transition to high school would have been easier if we had more help evaluating placement in math and for language classes. The teacher's at West were responsive to questions but a more formalized process of transitioning from home school to West would have been helpful.
- I didn't want the State to raise my children. I'm more concerned with their character than their academics.
- From what I hear from other people, MMSD is doing a good job with education, especially when there is funding to limit the class size. Our family enjoys home schooling, and I feel my kids (one of them is not school-age yet) are learning well. If there were ever circumstances which caused us to look for alternatives, the Madison Public Schools would be the first place we'd look. Keep up the good work!
- We did finally transfer our daughter to another school. She is no longer home schooled due to the fact that she needed the structure and synergy of a classroom. She has been attending Franklin. Elem. We still disagree and are bothered by the fact that TV. is part of the day at times. We should provide better outlets and support for our teachers. But, we are pleased with her teacher.
- Daughter's education so far: K-5 - Christian School - A Beka Accelerated format; 1st - Home Schooled - Sonlight; 2nd - MMSD 3rd & 4th - Home Schooled. Complaints about MMSD: 1) books are "gross" for reading level (6th grade) - she claims they have witches, fantasy, murder, strongly dislikes Harry Potter and series of unfortunate events, etc. 2) Class time mostly spent keeping kids in order - 3) Too much bullying - certain bullies are cuddled or not dealt with. 4) Teachers and students /pick on students with different beliefs, or who question a teaching, or ask "uncomfortable" questions. Some teachers have an "agenda" certain pet topics or ideas they push. 5) No history was taught in 2nd grade except during Black History month and a few patriotic songs (she was glad the home teacher was more old fashioned) 6) Only 20 min. to eat lunch! 7) Gym classes/and recesses often become "movie days" and the movies were not appropriate.