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Sent: Friday, January 9, 2015 11:30 AM
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Subject: Richland 2 School System

After having my children in Richland 2 School System since 1999 and still have one child in today, I am so disappointed, angry and upset. Both my children started in the Anna Boyd Child Development program and continue in RD2. Here is my account of what we have gone through:

- When our daughter, Audrey, was in kindergarten, she told the school bus driver she was to get off the bus at the house not at day care. He let her out with NO ONE at home. She did not have a note, no parent or teenager was there to meet her and she had never gotten off the bus at the house.

- Audrey was diagnosed with ADHD in 2nd or 3rd grade. She also had a major test anxiety that made her peel her fingers until they bled during testing. After almost a YEAR, we finally got her a 504 plan and accommodations for small group testing. Why it took a year, we had no idea, but things went from bad to worse.

The worse is the life of our son, Evan:

- Our son, Evan, was diagnosed with ADHD also, but much earlier in life. Both children are adopted. Approximately 80-90% of adopted children have ADHD. After going on medication for ADHD Evan continued to have problems.

- I begged and pleaded with the elementary schools to test him for a learning disability. At one point, it was suggested that Bob and I have him tested and pay for it ourselves. I was taking a class on Special Education at Columbia College and had just completed the laws the school systems must follow. Finally, after having an attorney write a letter, Evan was tested at the end of 5th grade. Yes - it took almost 5 years for RD2 to finally agree and guess what - they found he had an LD.

- We constantly hear how behind he is in school. Inside my head, my response is 'Really? Imagine! He had an LD and didn't receive accommodations and/or help for almost 5 years of schooling. Amazing!' But I keep these to myself and nod instead.

- Evan has been teased at all levels of school, continues to have a hard time in classes, etc. Dr. Bill Sullivan (retired from RD2) said that is not unusual because children with ADHD cannot stand to sit in classes where there is no activities. I had to pull Evan out of North Springs Elementary at the end of 3rd grade because he was being bullied for having accommodations and the principal, Denise Barth, told us that she could not guarantee he would not be in class with the bully in 4th grade - after we brought in a letter from his doctor/therapist about it. The main office agreed to move Evan to Lonnie B. Nelson.

- Evan continued to have issues in middle school with being behind. We were so proud when he made SVHS's B Baseball team in 7th and 8th grade. He quit playing in 9th grade because of grades and because several players called him 'Special Ed Boy' and other names in the dug out. We had to pay for tutoring, although him being behind was RD2 fault for not caring about the child. We stumbled through middle school but 'graduated'.

** Evan killed his first rabbit in January 2013 during 8th grade. He wore the SPENT shot gun shell on his keychain with my

father's dog tags until 10/31/2014. More on that later.

- High school is even a bigger challenge for Evan. He's behind - how does one catch up after the school system does not give a living.... for 5 years? The class sizes are huge, and what happened to 'general math' and 'general science' for students that are not going to college. We know Evan will not go - at least right away. Everything is college prep. It is ridiculous. This year has been the worst.

- On October 31, 2014, I received a call from the high school that Evan was going to be put up for expulsion. It was for wearing the SPENT shot gun shell on his key chain because it was considered a weapon. The same shell he has been wearing out in the open on his belt loop since the middle of 8th grade (January 2013). He had also gotten into a fight - off campus and with a 17 year old that doesn't even go to SVHS. When I got to the school, Evan was in handcuffs in the SRO's office. Not something a mother really wants to see.

- Bob and I hired an attorney for the manifestation hearing and expulsion hearing. The three of us were very happy after the manifestation hearing determined Evan could go back to school. When we went for lunch, Evan's words were 'I never thought I'd be happy to hear I can go back to school.' That happiness ended quickly for the family. Both Evan and I have been told by people at the school that the charges were BOGUS and should have never happened. So, a child with an LD was kicked out of school for 7 days, we spent \$1500 on an attorney that we didn't have and once again, the happiness of school turned into 'I'm being targeted by the school and they just want me gone.'

- Evan has been out 3 days this week with an extreme sinus infection. Both he and I were told yesterday that he needed to go to advisory for first period today. He got up EARLY, got to school EARLY, went for advisory and was late for first period. He had to go to E2 and will now probably get another ISS or maybe an OSS. Personally, I think the worst thing the school system can do to a child with an LD is put them out of class. Once again, the child is getting further and further behind.

****Do we feel like the school is targeting him and wants him out? Very much so!**

If this was just my child going through this at RD2, I would say so. I am a professional accountant at a major employer (over 10,000 employees all together) in Columbia, SC. The department I sit in has 47 people: 3 have children in private school, 10 have children in other school districts, 20 have no school kids and the remainder - 14 people - have children in RD2. Out of the 14, there are 3 - YES THREE OF US - that are going through the same issues with our children with LDs. That is 21% of the RD2 people in the department are having our children feel like SECOND CLASS STUDENTS in this highly taxed school district. It is shameful! We have to fight to be tested, fight to have accommodations, etc. Why did they House and Senate waste time putting the laws into effect if school districts don't do what they are supposed to do?

I am the first to admit Evan is not an innocent. But let's face it - going over our history with RD2 and the fact there are 3 families at work going through the same strife day in and day out for our children is sad and ridiculous! He is definitely not the worst child at the school. Teachers and staff like him, he's very respectful.

And this week, we were told we have to take Evan to Intervention Services due to having ISS 3 times. One of the times were for the BOGUS charges against him. We have an appointment for 1/14, but are taking him under protest. He sees Dr. Bill Sullivan every other week. Which we pay for and Evan enjoys him, feels comfortable with him. He does not feel comfortable doing anything under the school district.

I have always been very active at the schools. But this will be my final year. I have helped raise massive amounts of money with the SV Education Foundation auction for what will be 5 years in April. I just can't give my time for a school district who does not care about the children who really need help. They only care about the elite students.

I have even asked for my tax money to be given back so we can send Evan to Sandhills School or another school that will care and help a child with an LD instead of making him feel like the poo on the bottom of a shoe. Of course, I was told no.

I will be pleasantly SHOCKED if I hear back from anyone that receives this email. I have copies all of the school board, RD2 Superintendent, SVHS administration we have dealt with, SC State Education Superintendent and Gov. Haley.

I can be reached at 803-361-1143 (cell), 803-264-2785 (work) or this email address.

Thank you!

Laura Turnmire