

To whom it may concern;

My family has been in Mandan since 2016. We have twin girls who are Kindergarteners, and a 16 year old daughter we adopted from foster care. Our twins were born 10 weeks early, and one has a medical background and autism spectrum disorder. When we toured at Christ the King Montessori it was a huge sense of relief that all their learning would be one on one, they would learn real life skills, and with the ratios the faculty truly would get to know and spend time helping them learn and grow, in ways public school could not. The statistics alone of Montessori education are worth knowing- many studies have shown superior academic and especially social outcomes for children in a Montessori classroom compared to public school peers. To anybody considering voting to support these schools and make them more accessible to parents, I encourage you to tour yourself to see the large differences of education and classroom environment. Our daughters are on their second year at Christ the King now and I can't say enough on how much they have learned in such an individualized setting.

Our teenager was in Mandan public schools for a few years where she started to fall through the cracks due to her mental health and background in 8 prior foster homes. Due to ultimately the overwhelming need and size of a school the size of Mandan High it was doing her more harm than good. She is typically a straight A student and very bright, but in a chaotic setting it was clear she needed a change. Homeschooling wouldn't be beneficial for her either as she is a social and outgoing child, and we both work outside of the home. Even though we are not religious, we decided to pursue a Catholic private school for her also and she has been at St Mary's for a month. The difference in her academics, mental health, and overall demeanor is night and day. The smaller school and ratios, along with different styles of learning has her engaged and excited to go to school.

My husband and I pay large amounts of tax dollars to the city and pay beyond our mortgage in private school tuition for our three children. We are not a high-income family by any means, I actually am a full-time college student and my husband owns and operates a small business. You won't find us having money to go on any fancy vacations anytime soon or getting new vehicles, but we choose to invest in the best education and environment for our children. This has caused financial strain on our family. The ability to have state education funds also help families like ours when the public school system wasn't the right fit for our children is, I believe, a step to more inclusive education for all children of our state. We are grateful for our private school options and how they have helped our children. Helping fund these schools and lower tuition for families like ours makes equitable education choices more accessible to all.

-Kathryn Dockter

Mother to Valerie, Eleanor, and Taya; students at Christ the King and St Mary's
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