

On Thu, May 15, 2014 at 5:10 PM, Esther Warrendorf <ewhomefinder@gmail.com> wrote:
Dear Concerned Teachers,

Please first note that I am responding at this time speaking only for myself, as the Concerned Parents have not yet all received the email, and discussed when we may meet. Over the next few days, we will endeavor to find a time suitable to everyone where we may talk to you at length.

Personally, I am thankful that you have contacted us, because I think you will find that we are not opponents, nor are we out to get you, but we are raising the same concerns that you are.

Please note that our letter stated, "academic mediocrity" NOT "academic mediocrity among faculty." This has never been about our teachers, BUT, as you stated, the materials and support for the teachers, which is lacking, and which in turn causes our children's test scores to suffer. Examples of what we mean by academic mediocrity:

1 - Beginning in the 5th grade, passing FCAT scores for 2012-2013 were 10-20% or more below state totals in most areas (see attached table). Additionally, scores for 5th, 9th and 10th grade seem to be declining over the past 3 years (although I know state questions and grading standards have been changing yearly.)

2 - Statements from administration and guidance departments at other high schools that children transferring in from DRS are typically academically behind and overwhelmed with the rigorous demands of the new school.

3 - Lack of availability or successful enrollment of children in Dual Enrollment or Honors/AP curricula.

Sub-par leadership:

"...our requests for assistance are given to the Secondary Principal who forwards the requests to the School Superintendent. From there, we get empty promises and no results." The Concerned Parents have also requested assistance and information from the superintendent, who states the problem is "on the hill" and University officials, who state that it can be handled at the school level, or something was done incorrectly at the school level, or they never received the request from the school. Sometimes the obstacle is explained to be the State Department of Education or the Teacher's Union (when we have asked why we can't improve teacher salaries.)

Negative Student Behavior:

It is my position that if the parents are not correcting negative student behavior at home, then the school should not have to put up with repeat offenders, and should expel them, in order to make room for children who want instruction. We do not want our children going to, as one DRS student said to me, "(the school) has a reputation as a second chance school." If the teachers are not able to get rid of chronic troublemakers, then again, we have a leadership problem at a higher level. If the school is concerned that if they take disciplinary action it will result in a higher dropout rate, then I need to know this and find a school with a more compatible philosophy. In my opinion, moving children from grade to grade without expulsion

or retention, even if it is deserved, and ultimately graduating them makes my child's diploma worthless.

I want every child at DRS to have a chance at success in life. And not just minimal success, but stellar success. I believe something in the political structure of DRS has to change to give them that opportunity. I am sure you cannot disagree with that.

I will make sure that all of the **concerned parents** have seen your letter, and I look forward to us all meeting and finding common ground. I realize that there are many upcoming evening activities in the next couple of weeks. Therefore, if you can send a list of good dates or bad dates for a meeting, it would be much appreciated.

In all sincerity,

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