



Action Update - Issue 82 :: November 14, 2006

“And the Bully goes down.....”



I was sued by the **Northwest Independent School District**. Using tax dollars, the district tried cruelty and intimidation. My only choice was to fight back.

A little history: Prior to the legal educational crisis, my son attended school in Northwest ISD for two and a half years. During that time, I attended all school meetings (meetings I was invited to), signed all educational assessment consents, and maintained a positive relationship with my son's teachers. I was interested and involved with my son's education.

What did cooperation get a parent in Northwest ISD? Unethical staff forced upon you by the school district superintendent who ignored my requests for her help, cruelty to a child, and the fraudulent concealment of educational records. Educational malpractice at it's worst.

I became concerned when my son, with an above average IQ, whom I read to nearly every day of his life, could not read or write. Socially, he was misunderstood and bullied. He was scolded by educators for not complying with simple tasks such as tying shoes, messy penmanship, not being able to read a book, or copy the board. His involuntary arm movements, lack of comprehending silent signals, and odd behavior were reported to me as “defiant” behavior.

One big problem. My son is autistic.

I had no idea about autism, as I had never been around autistic

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children. Pre (Private) diagnosis, my laymen's notions of autism were consistent with the character "Rainman".

In spite of the fact that I had repeatedly asked for my son's complete educational records, the administration of Northwest ISD withheld three years of psychological screening reports from me (2002, 2004, 2005). I was forced to solicit help from Office of the Attorney General, Texas Education Agency, the U.S. Department of Education, the Office of Civil Rights, and various elected officials. In 2005, TEA ordered Northwest ISD to send my son's educational record sealed, via a Trophy Club Police squad car. Unfortunately the packet of documents, signed and dated by Northwest ISD administrative staff, was thousands of documents short of being my son's entire educational record. In March 2005, a second management level administrator provided me a second set of records. They were signed and numbered, but unfortunately, also missing many documents! It took an attorney, and the legal process just to obtain my son's full educational record. I am still waiting on access to originals.

About six months later, I was sued in Due Process. The Bully, Northwest ISD, armed with legal counsel funded by our tax dollars had limitless means for this frivolous and intimidating litigation against a parent. They underestimated me, as I fought back.

I was told the odds were against me, when we filed a counterclaim against Northwest ISD's petition for due process against me. However, by that time, the educational malpractice had done a toll on my son, my family, and our livelihood. Even though Texas parents lose 91% of the time in school litigation, and even after I found out our judge was the toughest DP Hearing Officer in Texas, this bankrupt, single mom fought back with a counterclaim.

The "**Education Malpractice**" verdict, (as I call it) was delivered on October 13, 2006 and the details of the case are public record. I encourage all parents to read the official transcript. The facts of the case are critical to all parents. ***It is important to see the lengths a district will go to silence a parent who suspects them of wrongdoing.*** Hopefully our nightmare will enlighten parents to the possibility of cruel student and parental betrayal which easily breeds in an unchecked public school administration.

Our circumstances are not an anomaly. Many parents who find themselves and their child in a "David vs. Goliath" type educational crisis want to load the proverbial sling shot with a very mighty blow. They want to protect their child. The truth is

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often obfuscated by governmental power, arrogance, tax dollars and limitless school district legal resources funded with our tax dollars. In a tribute to every child damaged by public schools and denied a free appropriate public education, every parent who has tried to advocate, and every family pushed from our public schools, Northwest ISD's moment of truth was ugly and damning. The truth showed a district with serious noncompliance issues, motivated by ill will to destroy a single mom and her autistic son! Even with unlimited use of our tax dollars, and with the deck stacked in their favor, it was a rare "parent knock out".

Now that the case is over, maybe we can get a look at my son's original records. Some of my documents, including a federal form, seem to be altered (in a sloppy cut and paste kind way). To this day, and in spite of repeated requests, I have never been allowed access to the originals.

Sincerely,
Melanie Watson

"Education might be all our kids have, to navigate them through life. It does not matter the child's obstacle, as long as they have a mom who will stand up for them". MBW

RECOMMENDED READING

- **Election Proves Results Matter**

And yet, when you get down to political brass tacks, the GOP acquitted itself fairly well. Not so well as to claim new constituencies, new peaks from which to govern. Well enough, all the same, in these extraordinary times to create the conditions for retaking lost ground and annexing new territory. It will take work and luck. Doesn't it always?