

November, 2007

Hi,

I'm the parent of a seventh-grader at McMillan Magnet. If you're reading this, it may mean you are considering sending your sixth-grade son or daughter to our school next year. Junior high can be a tough time for a 12-year-old boy or girl — they're not children anymore but still need the guidance of caring adults. The academic and social decisions they make over the next few years will impact them for the rest of their lives.

With that in mind, my husband and I had a lot of questions as we contemplated putting our son on a bus and sending him across the city to school. From kindergarten through sixth grade, he attended the school a block from our home, Prairie Wind Elementary near 108th and Fort Streets. We had assumed he would stay with his classmates and attend Morton Magnet, which is the neighborhood middle school. But he came home from school one day last year excited about opportunities at a school we had heard little about — McMillan Magnet. McMillan students had visited Prairie Wind and talked about its magnet focus on engineering, math, communication arts and technology.

Because of our son's interest, we began to educate ourselves about McMillan. We talked with other parents, visited the school's web site and attended an Open House. When I called McMillan to ask some questions, I was connected directly with the principal, Dr. Bigsby. He took the time to answer all of my questions — *Would our youngster adjust to a new group of friends? Would he be challenged academically?* — and even some questions I didn't ask. *Would he be safe?* Dr. Bigsby assured me that McMillan is a safe environment. That has proven to be the case. My son feels comfortable in the hallways at McMillan and has made friends from across the city.

Our young man hopes to major in engineering or architecture in college, so his favorite classes are Technology & Electronics and Honors Algebra. Next semester, he will take Introduction to Architecture. He also has gotten involved in many positive activities. This year, he ran cross country and placed 10th in the city-wide meet. He stays after school several days a week to participate in clubs — chess club, bridge club and the jazz band. Because transportation is provided for school as well as after-school activities, we don't have to worry about how he will get to or from school. With both my husband and I working, that's a big help.

There's one other thing I'd like to say about McMillan. The staff is terrific — they really care about our child. His cross-country coach helped him set goals to improve. His teachers send e-mails letting us know how he's doing. And Jill Best, the magnet coordinator, is a warm, friendly face who looks out for the magnet students.

Choosing a magnet can be a difficult decision because it's tough for both parents and students to leave behind familiar environments and friends. But I hope you will seriously consider McMillan. It has been a positive decision for our family, and I believe it could be for yours, too.

Warmest regards,

Connie White