

November 2007

To Prospective McMillan Students and Parents,

Thank you for considering McMillan and the magnet program provided to us by OPS. The opportunity to help our daughter pursue her gift through this program is one we appreciate and I know you will too.

Honestly, I think we tossed the first several magnet brochures to hit our mailbox. Then one day something stood out for me with the one sent by McMillan. Our daughter is gifted in math – something I always heard it's hard to maintain with girls when they hit a certain age. Suddenly being smart, especially smart in typically-male dominated subjects, is “not cool.” So, I read the brochure and asked our daughter to consider it. She adamantly said “NO!” She was in sixth grade at Dundee and the thought of not moving on the neighborhood junior high with her friends was unthinkable.

Then my nephew, who attended Carnegie Mellon graduate school, got a great high-paying job at Microsoft. Things started to “click” in my daughter's head about staying strong with her skills and leveraging them for career and life goals. She agreed to a tour. The tour really helped her see what this seemingly foreign junior high experience could be. She told us she would like to attend McMillan at that point. I believe she saw it as an opportunity to stand out, be special and stay directed versus following the crowd.

On the first day of school it was very, very hard for us to drop her off at a junior high. She had no friends and was, frankly, among many people who did not look like her. The first couple of weeks were hard as she settled in and got used to what I know of just any junior high. Then she started taking hold, making friends, joining clubs, being embraced by teachers, counselors, and friends.

Today she is in eighth grade and tells me that she's so glad she attended McMillan and that she knows she will have the friends she made here for life.

The decision to have our daughter attend McMillan took courage on her part, and it took faith on our part – that she would be safe, secure, and grow as a person and a student. We have known we could talk to the teachers and administrators to express our concerns, and we have been very happy with our decision. We have two boys in elementary school today who will tour McMillan and consider attending as well.

I encourage you to go with your gut. Let your child chime in on the decision and then be a little patient with your decision if at first there's a settling in period. I think that will happen at any junior high.

Good luck!

Wendy Wiseman