

4/3/15

Dear School Committee Members,

I am aware that voting for grandfathering siblings of those currently enrolled school choice students within NRSD will take place on Wednesday April 8th, 2015. Since meeting with school committee members, Mr. Wood, and Aleta Masterson last Wednesday April 1, 2015, I have surveyed school choice families to determine how many have siblings would consider placement within the district if the opportunity arose. My findings indicate that only 7 siblings of current students would enter the system.

I explained my stance and the parameters in which the vote would allow. I reiterated to them that I am asking the school committee to vote on grandfathering siblings of those current school choice students **only if there are seats available within the appropriate grade of each candidate.** I clarified, I do not have the data to confirm where seats are currently available. In my case, I am looking for a seat in kindergarten in Stow. Through information from Mr. Wood, I know there are seats available.

An article was published in the Stow Independent on March 4, 2015, where Assistant Superintendent George King stated that some of the budget hike is due in fact to the decrease in school choice income. I am not suggesting that there is availability for all 7 students within the NRSD. However, if a class has space, the cost of that student filling up a seat is negligible. Another benefit, the increased income from the sending town can supplement the funding and aid the ailing budget.

I am greatly appreciative of your consideration. I am aiming to keep families together within a school system and community. My recommendation is not to re-open school choice, but instead to implement a transition period until it phases out.

Thank you again for your time and consideration.

Sincerely and hopefully,

Hilare Bowie

Dear School Committee Members,

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> I greatly appreciate the opportunity to express my concerns and thoughts regarding School Choice within the Nashoba Regional School District (NRSD). At this time it is my understanding that the School Choice program is being discontinued. I currently have a second grader in the Center School in Stow. Come Fall I will have a kindergartener, who I am advocating for to keep within the same district as her brother. I'm aware that NRSD does not have a grandfather clause to allow siblings into the program if the School Choice program has been denied. Through research, I found that many surrounding towns; such as Acton-Boxborough, Littleton, Greenfield, Holbrook, and some Boston schools, (see below attachment) have instituted a grandfather clause allowing siblings only of current School Choice students to be enrolled without opening the school choice lottery to the general public. After consulting with Roger Hatch (rhatch@DOE.mass.edu), the School

> Finance Programs Administrator with the Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE), of the Massachusetts Department of Education (DOE), I learned that it is the school committee's decision to accept siblings only of those School Choice students already in the system. This decision is upheld by vote and at the discretion of each individual school district. Mr. Hatch clarified that there is no over governing legislation prohibiting grandfathering of siblings without opening the lottery to all. At this time I would love to know how many siblings are candidates for grandfathering and of those how many would participate in the School Choice program given the opportunity.

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> At this point I am advocating for a school committee vote in favor of implementing a grandfather clause for sibling of students currently enrolled in the School Choice Program. This week, I have started to gather signatures from proponents who favor the inclusion of a grandfather clause for siblings in order to keep families together. Below I have attached an article emphasizing the benefits not only to families, but also to the school districts in preserving families within the same school. As a school choice parent I have completely invested myself in my children's education and the school community. My son has had an amazing experience and is thriving within NRSD and I would love for my daughter to be able to have the same opportunity.

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> Sincerely,

> Hilare Bowie