

6. When J.T. was young, my husband and I moved to Seminole County because of its great public schools. We understood they were an A-rated district based on the state's school grade scale. They have also been listed as the number one district in the state by Niche.

7. J.T. attended our local public schools for kindergarten through sixth grade, from 2014 through 2021, and she had a great experience for the first several years. Whenever we had any issues with the local public school, the principals were great at helping and resolving any concerns.

8. Unfortunately, our experience with the public school declined during COVID. During J.T.'s sixth-grade year, 2020–2021, the local district had options for in-person learning with COVID restrictions or for remote learning. We used a hybrid option for J.T., and we did not think that either option was helping her learn.

9. For the 2021–2022 school year, we chose to enroll J.T. and C.G.T. in Smith Preparatory Academy using their scholarships. We chose SPA because of the Classical Christian curriculum and the affordability when using the scholarship.

10. For the 2023–2024 school year, J.T. was asking for a change for high school. We toured several schools in the area, and we chose Champion Prep as the best option because it had good academics, electives such as robotics, keyboarding (piano), guitar, and many art classes to choose from, and it had classes through twelfth grade. We enrolled both J.T. and C.G.T. there for the fall of 2023, using scholarships to be able to afford the tuition. Although the scholarship only covered part of the tuition there, we eventually enrolled all four children in that school.

11. While we intend to use the scholarship again next year, we will be changing schools for C.G.T., C.T.T., and G.T. due to costs. Even with their scholarships, affording tuition for all four of our children is becoming too costly for us to afford.

12. We have found local private schools that offer more affordable tuition rates while still offering good academics for our children. We will enroll C.G.T. in King of Kings Christian School in Maitland and enroll C.T.T. and G.T. in Ecclesial School at Northland in Longwood.

13. We did consider our local public school for J.T.'s ninth grade year because she wanted to consider Lake Mary High School. We attempted to tour the school, but I was not pleased with the response we received from the school. They only had students provide the tour. They could not answer all of my questions. The students did provide me with the person who would be in charge of her scheduling to answer my questions. But that person would not answer any specific questions unless we enrolled J.T. in the school.

14. We also toured the elementary school that C.G.T. would be attending in the public school system for the 2023–2024 school year. It was the same school J.T. attended. But we felt it was too large for C.G.T. and felt it would be too much for him after being in a small school, small class environment that he was used to in the private school he attended.

15. Since COVID, I became very active within the community, including helping to lead the removal of COVID protocols in the public schools. After hearing from many parents, teachers and staff for multiple ongoing years, it was clear the school system has declined in academics, safety, enrollment and good teacher retention. Enrollment has dropped from 67,000 students to 56,000 students. The district is facing a million-dollar budget deficit, and they continue to blame scholarships and decline in birthrates even though many of their problems are not financial.

16. I do not believe the public schools would be a good fit because of their decline post-COVID. I understand from families in the public schools that the school district no longer gives good principals and good teachers the autonomy it did before COVID and that the academic and personal development for students has suffered as a result. While I thought our local public schools gave J.T. a

good education before COVID, I believe they no longer offer that same quality of education for my younger children.

17. Without the scholarships, we could not afford the current education options for our children. Affording tuition for all our children is already difficult even with the scholarships helping with some of the costs. If a court were to stop the scholarship programs, we would likely have to return some or most of our children to the local public schools, which we believe will harm our children's academic development.

I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct.

Signed by:
Jessica Tillmann
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Jessica Tillmann

6/15/2026

Date

Longwood, Florida
City and State