LETTER

Don't Judge All Online Schooling By This 'Virtual Charter Hell'

To the Editor:

The post "15 Months in Virtual Charter Hell: A Teacher's Tale" in the Living in Dialogue opinion blog left me conflicted (Education Week Teacher, Jan. 6, 2014).

While I agree that the virtual-charter-school situation described is not in the best interest of students or teachers, what caused me more concern was that the blog post made it sound as though virtual schools should be avoided. I disagree. Not all virtual schools are the same.

As an online teacher with the North Carolina Virtual Public School, I can report that my experiences have been the complete opposite of those described in the blog. At the heart of every NCVPS program, employee, and teacher is the same goal: to do what is best for students.

We know that online learning is for all students, but courses are not one-size-fits-all. The key to making the course come to life for all students is the relationship between the student and the teacher. The teacher personalizes the course for students. With a class capped at 20 students, I have that necessary one-on-one time with my students. I have been fortunate to work with all types of learners. Whether I am working with students who excel, tend to struggle, or have special needs, I am able to meet their needs in the online classroom.

As an online teacher, I am always collaborating with my colleagues. We work together to share best practices and resources. Reflection is constant. We receive coaching and feedback on our teaching throughout the semester. We are always examining our best practices and refining them to better support students.

As an online teacher at a school where student success is the focus, I am saddened that there are some virtual schools out there giving online education a bad reputation. I would hate to see all virtual schools lumped into this category. The description certainly does not fit us all.

Jen Currin

http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2014/02/19/21letter-3.h33.html?tkn=YUQFJOONzrDmTsPKVJmihPu9zDPKcpnOjakKg&print=1
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Vol. 33, Issue 21, Page 32