

Greetings,

I am writing to inform you of the wonderful work of PISOTA Charter School continues to complete for my son Gabriel Butler, a eighth grader. Gabriel began middle school at a public school named, Theodore Davis Middle School. During his enrollment at this school, he was a victim of bullying which started early in the sixth-grade year. Each day he would come home crying and full of anxiety because students were calling him names and talking about his smell. He is extremely sensitive to this because he has done everything, he can avoid this, and it is not his fault. He is taking medicine and prescribed hygiene products. However, he is a 6-foot-tall student in middle school, and this has proven to be challenging as he stands out from other students. He was jumped at the bus stop as a student approached him in school and said I want to fight you after school. At the bus stop, the bully and two of his friends proceed to throw shoes, items and punch him. Parents stopped them but his back, head and other areas of his body were hurt for days. We reported the incident to the school and an investigation was launched. The school could not provide me with disciplinary actions toward the students, but charges could not be brought up because of the age of the other student. After the investigation, the school apologized and thanked me as the parent for bringing this to their attention as they found twenty-seven students involved in this bullying investigation. Yet, this left Gabriel with the challenging responsibility to return to school. With fear in is heart, I had to watch him put on a brave face not knowing if something else would happen. He stated that at lunch the student sat close to him, and he would hear comments from him. I would beg me to not return to school. He would go to the counselor's office and ask the come home.

When we got the notice from PISTOA that Gabriel was accepted into the school, there was a burden lifted from the entire family. Slowly, I began to see the worry lift from Gabriel's eyes as he made new friends and experienced a welcoming, empowering, supporting family atmosphere that PISTOA offers to its students. Gabriel has increased is grades and attendance and joined the basketball team while receives mentoring from the coaches that are valuable to his healing. He still expresses how is trying to move past the hurt that his experience has left. This is why I believe that PISTOA needs your continued support and funding to help students like my Gabriel who are talented and are made fun of for being different. I send a special thank you to PISOTA for all they do and as a parent and employee of Charles County public school, see the importance of the specialized educational approach that supports my student and his interest of theater.

Thank you for your time,

Ryan Roddey