

Parent Response

To: All Parents

In the matter of Amanda Pazdro v. Sumner County Board of Education, it is our hope that the decision of Judge Thomas Stovall will not discourage any parent who is contemplating due process action against a school district. Every case is unique and parents need to pursue whatever action is necessary to insure the appropriate education of their child.

Our belief is that Amanda has always had the capacity to learn if taught in a manner appropriate for a child with an autism diagnosis. Sumner County School District does not utilize the most effective intervention to teach children with autism (i.e. applied behavior analysis) therefore it is our contention that it is unfair to limit Amanda's ability to learn both functional and core academics because of the school district's inability to teach children with autism. Children should not be subjected to the "soft bigotry of low expectations" as stated by President George W. Bush.

Though Judge Stovall believes that Amanda "will likely never perform significantly beyond the first grade academically," we do not agree with him. In the short time that we have employed an applied behavior analysis therapist to teach Amanda at home, we have witnessed an amount of learning by Amanda unequalled to that achieved in the four years she had attended Beech High School. We agree with Kevin S. McGrew, PhD, Director, Institute for Applied Psychometrics and one of the writers of the Woodcock Johnson intelligence tests, when he stated in his powerpoint presentation *Intelligence and School Achievement* "...unfortunately, many educators, administrators, psychologists, etc. think this figure (IQ score) reflects reality---that a person with a low IQ score can only be expected to achieve at or below their IQ score. This belief reflects the inaccurate assumption that IQ test scores are extremely strong predictors of achievement and also suggests an implicit internalization of low standards and expectations for kids with cognitive disabilities within the education system. Our intelligence tests are *fallible* predictors of current and future achievement."

Sincerely,

Ed and Antoinette Pazdro

March 3, 2010