

To whom it may concern

My name is Sandra Acosta Casillas I am the mother of Isaac Acosta. I am writing this letter to explain our families' situation and reasoning for transferring my son from one school to another.

My son had been attending school in Reynolds district from 2009 to 2014 from 4<sup>th</sup> grade 8<sup>th</sup> grade. In Feb. of 2014 I was granted a habitat home which is selected for you. The new home was a blessing but it meant that we moved into a new district.

School has been a priority in our home so we stress good grades and we reward our children with allowing them to play sports of their choice as long as grades and participation is in a good status.

Once we moved I wanted my kids to be stable so my priority was to have my children transfer to their new school with no affect to my children. So I enrolled them into Centennial without knowing that I had any other option. It is during this transfer that I am finding I had the option to keep my son in that district all along but I was never informed of that till now.

My children had to adjust a lot with the move, a new home, a new community and a new school. Three of my kids did ok but Isaac had a hard time. He was going into high school without knowing anyone and in a school he was not familiar with. I know now that it was traumatic change for him. My son expressed several times that other student were discriminating on him, for the way he dressed and the fact that he was Hispanic.

He started the year slow and study but it was obvious that it was affecting him to be out of his element. He started asking for expensive clothing and shoes, which I could not afford but to satisfy him and make him feel better I attempted to purchase this image he was hiding behind. He had to look like the other kids he said, so that he can fit in. He told me that kids there are from families that are not like ours.

I am a mother of four and soul provider for our family. I work two jobs just to pay our bills, but I am an advocate for my children and I will do what they need to give them a fighting chance out of the life we have had to live.

My son has always had good grades; he takes a lot of pride in that. I meet with his teachers, and I found that some of them also had stereotype him. One in particular stands out. His Spanish teacher moved him from begging Spanish to highest level s Spanish. She assumed that because he spoke Spanish then he need to be moved up but never battered to ask is he was able to handle that. Isaac brought home his first F and that is when I went in to speak to the teacher. I told her that the higher level Spanish was too hard for him; he is not fluent in Spanish. He has learned it from hearing it not in any kind of academic setting. I told her she was setting him up to fail but she was convinced that he was just not applying himself. So, the next term he once again brought an F and that is when I had the second conversation with this teacher and I expressed that just because Isaac had a Spanish name and was able to speak does not mean he can pass that class. I am born in Mexico and I don't know her homework. He needs to be dropped to a lower grade before it became a permanent grade on his transcript. It was then that she finally heard him and moved him to a more reachable grade. Isaac completed the class with a C.

This is what I mean by fighting for my son, he already feels he has no voice and those around him make stereotype and labels based on his looks and his race.

This is when I went to meet with the Reynolds district and asked what my options were and I was told that the only way he can transfer was during the open transfer period in which only a few kids are allowed to transfer in. I cried, right there in the office because I had no way to take him out of where he was at, and even if I get approved he would still have to complete the year with Centennial and that is not what I wanted to tell my son.

But that was not the end; I rewarded my son for all his effort in placing him in base baseball. To tell the truth he wasn't too happy about it at first but once he started to play and the coaches seen he was a natural athlete he started to like it. But that is when I saw the biggest change in him so far. He would come home and go straight to his room without saying anything. One day he got home crying, yes! crying like a baby and he just could not tell me what was wrong. I begged him and he would not tell me. Times keep going from time to time he was sad. Till one day almost to the end of the baseball season he finally tells me that the team had been bullying him. The other students were calling racial names, discriminating on him clothing and his gear. Trying to take things from him and pushing him around.

I reacted like any parent would I got really mad and wanted to do anything in my power to bring attention to these kids but he begged me no to because it would only get worse. So my husband went and had a side meeting with the coach and told him what had happen and why Isaac wanted to leave. The coach apologies and had some meeting with the kids that Isaac said they started to change with him being nicer. By this point I had made up my mind to move my son in any way possible.

It breaks my heart that my son had to go through all that his freshman year. He came out with good grades and I have approached him for it but I apologies for making him go day after day. Like I said before I am a mother of four children that I will do anything for. I am from Mexico, brought here at 9 years old. I had to learn the culture and adapt to the ways things are done here. I had wonderful parents that worked extremely hard to give me what I had, but I made bad choices because I did not have a voice to help me. I was affected by my environment and I was a trouble child till I became a teen parent. I will do anything to prevent my children from following my footsteps. I am their voice and I am asking you today to not take the only thing I have to reward him. His sports which keep him busy, motivated and inspired to do more. Without it you have a kid that has nothing more to loose and can follow another path.

In Reynolds he has family members that currently are coaches, security and students. He has friends that he has grown up with and that can relate to him. He doesn't have to hide behind an image he can be himself. He is motivated to go to college and return to his avid program which centennial did not have. So many tell me why do you want to go to that school it's a bunch of trouble and kids with high needs, and all I can say is "sure but to my son its home".

I ask that you give my son a chance and allow him to show what all he can do. My husband and I are making a commitment to help him along the way. With homework, meeting, transportation and most important to achieve the graduation certificate I know he will appreciate.

Thank you for your time and support



Sandra Acosta Casillas