



*My son Nicholas began attending Edison Middle School in 2007.* During his years of education in the Green Bay Public School District I have, overall, been impressed with the level of commitment by the staff. From the lunch room ladies to the principals, they provide my son with the resources he needs as a special education student to be a successful student.

Still, we approached middle school with fear. I was concerned, due to my son's behavioral and social problems, that he would be an outcast and unable to cope with the huge population of students.

Our experience has proven my fears unfounded. From his first day at school through the present, the teachers at Edison Middle School have shown tremendous commitment, creativity and compassion to ensure my child's success.

With the guidance of his special education teacher, Rebecca Decker, Nick has made a niche of friends and feels he belongs.

Prior to the school year Nick had an educational plan which recognized his difficulty in taking notes. Before the school year began the school had an action plan ready to allow Nick to receive a copy of class notes that had fill-in-the-blank slots to encourage him to participate as fully as he was capable. I was amazed after the first week of school when it became apparent that Nick was taking all of his notes independently.

Ms. Decker recognized the need to be ready to support Nick, but that he should be challenged to progress as quickly as he was able. With her firm, consistent, yet nurturing support he has made strides I had not thought possible.



Ms. Rebecca Decker and Nicholas (Edison Middle School)

Many children with autism require firm, consistent boundaries and discipline. What most people don't realize is that boundaries and discipline must be applied with the child's knowledge that he is cared for by the teacher. Authority without compassion leads to feelings of fear and being out of control.

Children with cognitive disabilities have plenty of experience with people telling them they are not good enough as they are. The message my son has received from Ms. Decker is you are a good person, who can do so much and I'll find a way, it may be a different way, to get you there.

*Karen W. Melep*

*The Green Bay Education Association represents 1,800 Green Bay public school educators.*

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