

Why the Freedom to Choose a School Is Important to Me and My Family

By Meredith Thompson
8th grade IDVA

1st Place

My name is Meredith Thompson and I live in Orofino, Idaho. My father is a logger. My mother has a college degree in Spanish. Here in Clearwater County, the school week is only four days long. It has been that way for many years now. Everything in the schools has been cut back to save money. My parents became concerned about the quality of education here. My mother began home schooling me so that I could study a broader curriculum than the public school could offer. She included Spanish, Native American studies, Art and World Religion in addition to traditional subjects. When I reached junior high age my mom began looking for a charter school program that would maintain the same high standards of learning that she had established for me. After all her

research, I am now enrolled with Idaho Virtual Academy (IDVA) which I like very much.

I am Nez Perce and have been studying the Nez Perce language for many years. The charter school schedule allows me to participate in more advanced Nez Perce language classes that are held during regular school hours. In fact, I love to study language; I study Spanish and French with my mom. It had always been my goal to study Mandarin Chinese; I began learning to write the characters on my own. When I found out I could take Chinese as a junior high subject at IDVA I was really excited. I am on my 54th lesson and loving it.

Most importantly however, I am a musician. The flexibility of on-line charter school allows me to study music and academics simultaneously. When my mom began home schooling me, my piano practice became more meaningful. I could practice in the morning instead of after school when I was tired or wanted to play. Now I study piano, organ and guitar. I accompanied the Orofino Junior Choir for three years and am currently a regular organist for

the Orofino Methodist church. I also conduct my own rock band. Every week I travel 40 miles to music lessons in Lewiston and Clarkston. On-line charter school makes all of this possible.

Because my dad is a logger, his time off is always in the winter. His schedule is the complete opposite of the public school. We could never take a vacation as a family. Now, we can take a vacation in the winter and I can take my school with me. We plan to do lots of snow boarding together this year and maybe even drive to the Grand Canyon.

My mom and dad are both very happy with the education I am getting at IDVA charter school this year. They keep close track of my progress and participate in my classes. My dad likes to do math and science with me. He knows a lot about wildlife biology and forestry from his job. I think my parents are more connected with my schooling now because it happens at home. As you can see, for me and my family, the freedom to choose an on-line charter school is very important.

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