

Interview with Home school student in Davis County School District
Questions

1. At what age did you begin home- schooling?

“I was 12 when I first started home-Schooling, almost 3 years now”

2. What made your family make this choice?

“I moved to Davis County 3 years ago and had been to 3 different schools and had really hard times with other kids teasing me and spreading rumors about me so my mom sat down with my Aunt and they decided that my aunt would home-school me for a while”

3. At what age did you start to feel as though you were being bullied?

“I have been made fun for several different reasons, but the first time I remember was in second grade in Granite School District”

4. Did the Teachers help you in any way?

“Not really, I remember one time another student through a rock at my head and a teacher helped stop the bleeding and pick the pieces out of my head. I don’t remember if anything was done about it.”

5. Did you feel safe while you were in school? Protected by the teachers and safe from other Children?

“No I never liked going to school because I didn’t feel like anyone cared”

6. What kind of Bullying have you experienced?

“Verbally from other kids, and physically from other kids”

7. How do you feel about yourself as a person? Do you feel as though you have value?

“Most of the time I just feel like I don’t belong here, anywhere, I’m not sure if I have value”

8. Do you think that you feel that way because of what you have gone through?

“I think I feel that way because of that and some other things but mostly that. It’s just really hard because I just feel like I am always different that other people my age.”

9. When did you first start to dislike school?

“I really started to not like school in third grade, I didn’t have friends and people would make fun of me because my hair was really long so they would cut pieces off and because I have to wear glasses, they would also make fun of me because I didn’t have any friends.”

10. How do you feel about school now?

“I kinda want to try to go back to school cause I miss having friends, but I am worried that it will be the same. I have gotten some friends and I want to learn but I am still having problems with some people around here even though I am not in school here anymore because they know me so I am scared.”

11. How has home schooling helped you?

“It has helped me in different situations but it just depends on the situation. I am glad that I am not being made fun of all the time but I miss being around people and having friends I feel alone when I am there and when I am not so I have gotten a job over the summer, Home-schooling has given me the opportunity to have more free time and to work on my own schedule and on my own time but still learn stuff.”

12. Will you ever go back to public school?

“I am going to go to high school next year but I am not going to go back to public school I am going to go to East Hollywood High in West Valley Utah. I am going to try that for a while and see if I like it, but I am really scared to meet new people and go through the same thing.”

13. Do you feel that your family was helpful and supportive when these situations of bullying took place?

“Yes very, they were very supportive. My mom always would talk to the teachers and the principles and my aunt has even met with my mom and the Super-Intendant of the School District to try to get the bullying to stop but it seems like they never really did anything that worked but it just kept happening. But my family was always really helping me get through it when I was upset.”

14. Do you feel that there is someone looking out for your best interest when it comes to your education?

“Yes I do, my cousin Tiffany helps me with homework, my aunt does my home-schooling and pushes me even when I don’t really want to do my work and my Mom always tells me that it’s important to go to school so that I can get a good job.”

15. Do you have desires to finish high school? Do you have any thoughts or plans to attend College? Why or why not? Is it related to your experiences in school?

“Honestly at this point after everything I do, but I still just want to see how high school goes first. I haven’t thought that much about college because I have had such a hard time already,

I kind of just want to be done, but if I do go I would like to go into Criminal Justice of some kind.”

16. In what ways have you feel that the adults in the educations system helped you if any?

“I don’t think they have really at all. I am left handed and had hard time writing when I was learning and they would even try to teach me to write with my right hand. They didn’t want to take the time to help me write with my left.”

17. In what ways have you feel hurt or angry because of the actions taken by the Adults in the School system? Either in the lack of perusing your complaints with an investigation or in personal bullying?

“ I still remember back to 2nd grade and my principle pulling me into school because I didn’t want to go, I have felt like teachers don’t believe me when I tell them things, They have called me a liar, when I started my period I was 9 and I had to go the bathroom to change my pad and my teacher at the time did not believe that, that was why I was going to bathroom so she said if I wanted to go I had to change it in front of her. The principle at Layton Elementary told me that I act like a “Satanist” I don’t know what that means but she would yell at me in front of the same kids that would cut my hair and steal my purse with my pads in it. I feel like they didn’t ever care because I had to change schools so much I was always the new person so when I would say something about what was happening with someone they would not believe me and not do anything about it. I have told almost every teach and principle about the problems I was having and they turn it around on me being the problem. I don’t understand why they would never believe me because I didn’t think I had done anything to make them not trust me I don’t even talk to anyone. I told my teachers more than once about things and they still did not do anything. My mom and my aunt were in the Principles office at least 1 time a month because they were not doing anything about it until they went to the guy at the school district and told him and he said that I was the problem to so they took me out of school.”

18. Were they ever supportive in your personal life?

“I had a couple teacher at William Penn Elementary that would talk to me about things that were going on at home but I have been to a lot of schools because of my problems, I don’t really feel like I was ever important to them, other than those couple of teachers I don’t remember anyone every asking me how I was personally or what was going on at home. I have really bad Asthma and I was sick a lot and so they thought that I just was missing school because I was lazy and didn’t want to go, or because my mom didn’t want to take me but for a lot of years I was in the hospital for at least a month every year. They never let me keep my inhaler in my desk; I would have to ask if I was having an asthma attack. I never thought that they cared about me.”

19. Have you ever thought about hurting yourself?

“These are scary questions to ask. Can I keep my name out?” “Yes” “I have many times, but it just depends on what was going on. I don’t really anymore but I still feel sad sometimes and time about it.”

20. Have you ever thought about dying?

“I have because I have been sick a lot in my life, but if you mean have I ever thought about killing myself the answer is yes to that to, I never told anyone about it though and I don’t think about it anymore, It’s just I use to get really depressed and sad and I would hate going because I knew what was going to happen every day. They would kick me and beat me up all the time and I just didn’t want to go through it anymore. I only made a plan once, but I didn’t think about it long before I changed my mind.”

21. Have you ever hurt yourself or anyone else?

“Ya, I don’t like to talk about it but sometimes when I was younger when I would get home from school I would go into the bathroom and bite myself or cut my legs so that I could try to get some of the pain out I guess. And it’s really hard not to get frustrated with my brother.”

22. In what ways have you helped others that were being bullied while you were in school?

“ My friend Breanna was being teased because she wet her pants because the teacher would not let her go to the bathroom and a group of kids circled me and her in the bathroom, so I pushed them away yelled at them to back off loud enough to get a teacher to come into the girls bathroom.”

23. Are you in any way sexually active? Do you have a boyfriend? Do you ever think about have a baby?

“No, I don’t want to date. I went through changes really early and I have been teased for a really long time because I have really large breasts and I am tall and thin, I have recently been teased horribly because of it over the last couple of years. I have been called a lesbian, dike, slut, whore, and a bitch because girls are jealous and boys spread rumors about me to get attention. I have been asked out several times but I just don’t want to date because of all of the gossip all the time, it has made me really insecure. I don’t know that I will ever want to have kids. Pretty much all of my friends are sexually active and talk about wanting to have a baby they are all my age and I am 17, I am not though.”

24. Do you mind if I use your name in this paper as a resource or would you rather remain nameless. It’s your choice you are free to remain anonymous?

“I would like it if you would keep my name anonymous.”

25. Has the fact you have been bullied changed your behavior? Have you ever found yourself bullying others in your family or otherwise? Were there consequences for your actions?

“Unfortunately yes, because of everything I think, I am just really angry so sometimes I get into fights with my brother and other people in my family or friends, my mom has had to have several talks with me about

26. What do you feel the appropriate consequences should be for students that bully other students?

“I think it depends on what kind of bullying it is, for verbal bullying I think they need to be spoken to about it and depending on what they said possibly suspension, also if they continue I think that parents need to be contacted immediately and they should have a meeting with the principle and the teacher so that everyone is aware of what is going on. I think that if it still continues to protect the child that is being bullied the other student or students depending on the depth of the bullying need to be suspended long term or sent to another district to go to school because the student will not feel safe in that school district with them because if they go to the same school again it will probably continue. Depending on how bad the physical abuse or bullying is I think they should not just be spoken to I think they should go straight to suspending them because when you actually physically hurt someone they are not safe anymore.”

27. What do you feel the appropriate consequences should be for Adults in the School system that do not take action when bullying takes place? Have you ever felt bullied by a teacher? How?

“I think that the ones that have bullied me should be fired because the ones that have me were elementary school teachers. They would yell at my face, one swore in my face and called me worthless, one wanted me to change my pad in front of her, and one put me in a closet until after lunch, it was called her time out box it was small and I couldn’t breathe. I was out of school for 2 days after that because of my asthma. The other people that didn’t do anything when I told them over and over again about what was going on with me I think should have to be suspended to and go to a special training on how to deal with things like this and also I think it is important well it would have been for me for them to tell me that they were sorry, but as of now a lot of them still don’t think they did anything wrong, it was all me.”

28. If you could say one thing that you would like others to know about your experiences, such as what you wish could have been done to prevent the trauma you faced, or how you have healed.

“I think that I would like to say to the students that if you have been bullied don’t be a bully it just causes more damage. I have done both and have had to learn some really hard lessons. If you are just one of the ones that are a bully and you don’t care what you say to anyone you should know that what you do and what you say will affect someone for the rest of their life. The things that happened to me I don’t think will ever leave me. I don’t know that I will ever be able to get over being hurt so bad and being so scared to go be around people and talk to people about my stuff, when even the teachers wouldn’t do anything about it.”

29. Do you think that you will have long term effects of the things you went through while you were in school?

“I kinda do I don’t know that I will ever be able to forget but I am trying to move on but it’s really hard because I am scared to go into new places.”

30. If you could share one part of your story to others to help the process in preventing bullying in schools what would it be and why?

“ First if I were talking to the students I would want to say, that the words that you say can hurt someone for the rest of their life, you don’t want to be responsible for that I have had to learn that the hard way, so 1 if you have been bullied just because you’re angry don’t bully back you are just continuing the cycle, and 2 and most important I think when you get hurt on the outside it heals faster than the things that hurt you badly on the inside. You wanting to make someone else feel bad is not making you any better of a person.

If I were talking to the teacher and other adults in school I would say, don’t make your students feel like they are not safe at school. When we leave our home and come to you we want to know that there is something that will be done to make it stop when something happens. We need to trust you like we do our parents. I never felt safe and it is going to take me a really long time I think until I really feel like I am safe in school again from the types of things that were done to me. Please be a part of what will make it stop.”