



Field Trips Should Come Back Full Force During the 2022-2023 School Year

May 24, 2022 by Educator Barnes

Last Thursday, my sons attended a fifth grade field trip to Kings Island. Fifth grade is the final elementary grade at their school. In addition to being an end-of-the-year field trip, it was also an end-of-elementary school field trip. Mr. Barnes and I were two of the field trip chaperones.

After the trip, I shared pictures online. Those pictures sparked conversation online and offline. Those conversations were with parents who have children attending school in the K-12 setting. In summary, they all wondered why their children did not have any field trips this school year.

For two school years, 5th graders at my sons' school have not been able to end 5th grade as previous 5th graders did in the past. Historically, they took an out-of-state trip called the 5th Grade Experience.

When the school year started, nothing was planned. Two parents and I reached out to the principal to instead have the 5th Grade Experience at their school which is happening today. After the 5th Grade Experience was planned, so many wonderful things happened! Money from a previously canceled field trip was used to help pay for the trip to Kings Island last Thursday.

Then, another group of parents came together to bring back the 5th Grade Graduation. Last Friday, they had a dance-a-thon with other activities to raise money for medical treatments for a fellow 5th grader who is ill. In the last two weeks of school, there were four scheduled events.

It wasn't until I posted the pictures that I truly understood that what my sons and other 5th graders had at their school was unique. When I engaged in conversation with other parents, I learned that some parents felt this same way even before the pandemic began. This bothers me because field trips serve as an opportunity to build relationships with their classmates and teachers and to have an off-campus experience that will be impactful as well as educational. Although going to Kings Island seems like it would only be a trip for fun, this trip to an amusement park involved science lessons before the trip and a science activity at Kings Island.

The key at my sons' school was parent power. Parents wanted more, and we got more. One parent told me that her child's school said it had to be educational. I told her that many places have already created lessons that are aligned with state standards to get teachers to bring their students there. Also, thoughtful teachers can find a way to connect standards to a field trip to make it both an enjoyable and educational experience.

What is the point in having students return in person if they are not going to have all the benefits of being back in person? Those benefits should include field trips. Schools that had

cut back on field trips before the pandemic need to also get on board. Cost may be an issue, but if you have parents on fire for field trips, they will make it happen.

Despite the loads of energy my sons and their friends had from 6:30 a.m. ALL THE WAY until 6:30 p.m., during the Kings Island trip, I am glad they had this experience. The pandemic has robbed us of too many experiences. I'm just glad that a sense of normalcy and fun has returned for my children, and I want this for other children next school year and beyond.

