



Stanford eCorner

Parents as part of the K-12 learning community

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Video URL: <http://ecorner.stanford.edu/videos/622/Parents-as-part-of-the-K-12-learning-community>

Smith believes that parents sometimes do not know what is best for their children. GreatSchools.net aims to make parents more informed about their education choices.



Transcript

So the question was in terms of ultimate success sometimes the parents aren't the right folks to identify what's best for their kids. We invested in a nonprofit called greatschools.net and the goal of greatschools.net is to help create more sophisticated consumers among parents. How it does that is a series of interactive tools to figure out what really does matter to you and what might be the best match for your child and also what's the data on the schools that you're considering going to? How are they performing compared to some other schools of similar demographics or similar design or whatever? So it's our effort to begin to tackle that problem. It is really good at part of that problem, especially the sorting of schools and how is my school doing relative to other schools. The interactive parenting thing, this is where my psych background comes into play, it's very hard to tell parents what's right for their kids. It's very hard to help parents think about that question in a way that's rationale and based on what's happening for their child in school. So greatschools.net is our first effort at that and I think that with that as a platform, it's probably going to need to be parent interaction. That's what we find happens. Parents go to greatschools.net and then talk to each other about well, this child works here but my other child, they're just different, it doesn't like the project-based environment so okay, go over to this school then which is more structured. But you're right, parents are a very important part of the equation and typically, particularly in low-income communities where parents may not have had successful public education experiences themselves, they're not very sophisticated about the data side of the equation and what they should be demanding.

So we are working on helping parents get access to information and be more sophisticated in how they think about things, and it's a tough challenge but you're right. It's a big part.