

When we went through the choice process with my daughter when it was only the second year. My daughter is very interested in the arts, so I figured that she would want to choose Blake. The two of us attended all three open houses, and I came away from that experience confident that she would be well served in any of the three schools. So, we left the decision totally up to her.



Imagine our surprise when she chose Paint Branch, with a signature of science and media! She hates science, but as it turned out, it was the media portion of the signature that attracted her. She took two years of TV production, years of photography, and AP Art where she focused her portfolio in photography. She is majoring in communications in college.

She did not choose Paint Branch because all her friends were going there, because for her, her friends were split between Blake and local private schools. And, in the end that did not matter as much as you might think, since she made many new friends that had attended different middle schools, including a girl who had attended private school through 8th grade and came to Paint Branch for high school.

*Patti Twigg, parent of a two PB graduates, both Briggs Chaney graduates*

We started our consortium search by going to the Paint Branch open house. It was an experience for our son who was coming from a small parochial school. He was amazed at the size of the school, but more importantly he was impressed with the courses available to him. The open houses at the other schools were equally inviting but there was something special about Paint Branch that won him over. I guess he felt very welcome and it has proven to be a very good decision for him. He has teachers that encourage him to perform; he has met friends he'll have for life. He has taken advantage of the many opportunities that the science and media signature offers.

*Bergie Speares, parent of a PB graduate, and a St. Andrew's graduate*

My husband and I are both MCPS employees who work at schools within the Northeast Consortium. We were very familiar with the choice process and felt confident that any of the three schools would be a good fit for our son, Patrick. All three have rigorous and challenging programs that would give our son an excellent education and prepare him for college. We attended all three open houses and were most impressed with Paint Branch. There was so much school spirit and enthusiasm from students and a welcoming, knowledgeable staff. Ms. Dixon spoke about her vision for Paint Branch, her excitement about the new school and shared the many accomplishments of former Paint Branch students. We left that evening wanting to become a part of the Panther community!



Patrick considered each school's signature program and was most interested in the Science and Media Academy. He enjoys photography and was excited about the opportunity to take classes in radio/television production.

We completed the required paperwork and waited anxiously for the decision. Needless to say, we were pleased to receive our first choice – Paint Branch!

My advice to families who are participating in this process is to gather as much information as possible about all three schools, attend the open houses, meet staff, talk to students and support your student in making an informed choice about which school to attend. Select a school that "feels" right for you and your child – a place to call home.

*Anita & John Vigna, parents of a current PB student and a Briggs Chaney graduate*

## Paint Branch High School

*Academy of Science and Media*

# Parent to Parent Parent to Parent

*Paint Branch parents  
share their experiences with Choice*



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<http://montgomeryschoolsmd.org/schools/paintbranchhs>

As a parent of an eighth grader interested in a medical career, we were interested in a school that would challenge her academic abilities and give her exposure to the sciences and medical careers. During our tours of the three schools in the Consortium we were very impressed at the presentation given by both the staff and students at Paint Branch High School. We could see that a lot of work had been put into the excellent presentation they gave. The environment was also friendly and comforting. Our daughter knew that same evening, that Paint Branch was the school of her choice and she was just impressed as we were. Our daughter graduated with a high GPA, and is a well rounded, hard working student thanks to all the excellent teachers she has had. Our son, loved every minute of Paint Branch. Our hats go out to the staff and principal of Paint Branch for a job well done.



*Florence Awojoodu, proud parent of two PB graduates, both White Oak graduates*

Neighborhood school vs. the choice . . . No matter how you feel about the school choice program in the Northeast Consortium area, the bottom line is your child has to make a choice of which one of the three high schools to attend. Our two children made the choice to attend Paint Branch, and we are very glad they did.

Our first child truly did look at the signature programs and entered the process with an open mind. Based on a stronger interest in the sciences, he chose Paint Branch. His little sister attended the open houses of the consortium schools wearing her Paint Branch spirit wear - already having made her choice based on her brother's experience at Paint Branch as well as her own positive feelings about the school.

As parents, we have been impressed by the academic rigor of our children's classes, particularly the AP classes. Equally important, not only were they able to develop their knowledge and interest in science through courses in the signature program, they also were challenged and developed new interests in other fields such as psychology and foreign languages.

Along with the academic program, Paint Branch offers many wonderful activities. We have enjoyed sitting on the sidelines of athletic fields as both of our children have participated and lettered in 3 different sports. They have

learned about leadership and teamwork, and expanded their social worlds by participating in the strong athletic program as Panthers. Their involvement in activities such as Key Club, Fellowship of Christian Athletes, and Honor Society, has rounded out their total high school experience in wonderful ways. Through these and other activities each of our children developed a terrific circle of friends at Paint Branch; great kids go to Paint Branch!

We have been very impressed by the energy, enthusiasm and friendliness of the faculty and staff at Paint Branch. The leadership, dedication, and hard work of the administrative staff are truly admirable, and we have always felt quite welcome as a family when we visit the school and participate in activities there.

If being a Panther is part of your future, then you and your child can look forward to a stimulating and rewarding 4 years that will not only prepare your child for college, but also for life!

*Marguerite Tom-Wigfield and Allan Wigfield, parents of two PB graduates, both Briggs Chaney graduates*

Like most parents around this area, we too went through the ritual of visiting the three area high schools in order to choose the best one for our son. Initially he kept changing his mind, not sure which school to choose, and sometimes wanting to go to the school his friends were going to, which also changed frequently. We wanted him to go to Paint Branch because we felt it had an excellent science and math program. We knew he was not inclined toward the arts so we ruled out Blake's signature program and he was also not very keen on computer science which ruled out Springbrook's signature program. We talked him into going to Paint Branch. He thought about it a lot and decided that science and math were his strong subjects and eventually he would pursue a career in this direction, he was better suited to Paint Branch. Now he feels it was a good decision.



He has had the most wonderful teachers, especially for science and math. By nature, he is the kind of person who can get along well with everyone. He ended up making a lot of great friends and building a strong relationship with his teachers. He took advantage of Paint Branch's athletic programs. One of the most exciting classes he is taking is

Television Production in which he has been enrolled since 10<sup>th</sup> grade. He considers this a fun course, loves every minute of it, in spite of the fact that assignments have to be completed under a lot of pressure and at short notice. He has also taken advantage of the numerous AP courses at Paint Branch. We are all very happy with what Paint Branch had to offer him and with how things turned out for him during his four years at Paint Branch.

*Lalitha Kutty, parent of a PB graduate and a Banneker graduate*

I have four children who are a total of 5 years apart in age; for several years we had all four in four separate schools within the NE Consortium. It was not intentional but with all the options available in the public school system in our area, we would be crazy not to take advantage of it. I thought that I would be overwhelmed with all the choices but I find that you only get bits of it each year as the kids get older and so it is easy to handle.

My last two sons went to Argyle Middle School for the IT magnet program when it was first opened. I was warned that I should wait till it had some time under its belt but I figured that at worst, I would just switch them back. It was fabulous. Of course, there were some issues like no busing but overall, it was wonderful for them. They were able to get their IT credits done in middle school which freed them up for other options in high school. Also, because Argyle was in a different cluster, it afforded them the opportunity to go to those high schools if they so decided.



My one son wanted to go to Springbrook for the IB program, my daughter choose Springbrook for the IB and other two sons choose Paint Branch. They choose Paint Branch because they were primarily math and science kids and also really wanted the ROTC program which is the best of the three schools.

My kids did not always go willingly to these schools since all their friends were going to the home school but, in the end, they are all very happy with the choices they made. I think the best part of the choices for the kids is that there is something for everyone.

*Keller Shinholser, parent of a current PB student, and a PB graduate Argyle and Banneker graduates*