



Immanuel Lutheran School

382 N. Grimes Street, Giddings, Texas | ilgtx.com
School: 979 542 3319 | school@ilgtx.com

April 12th, 2026

Dear Families,

Choosing the right school for your child is one of the most important decisions you will ever make. It is not just an academic decision, it is a decision about your child's faith, growth, confidence, identity, and future.

From time to time, we all ask a very honest question:

“Should we consider moving our child to another school?”

The answer is not simple, but research can help guide us. Educational researcher [John Hattie](#) has spent decades studying what works best and the impacts of hundreds of influences (categories) on child learning. John Hattie's research is trademarked and densely summarized as [Visible Learning](#).

Among the 251 categorized influences, John Hattie has identified one influence, in 243rd place (or 9th to last), that often surprises parents:

“Changing schools has a negative impact on learning.”

In simple terms, moving schools, in and of itself, tends to set children back academically and socially. New environments, new expectations, and disrupted relationships all come with a cost and consequence.

So if moving schools can be harmful, *when* should a family consider making a change?



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When It May Be Necessary to Move

There are moments when a child's faith, well-being or ability to learn is already under significant strain. In these cases, a school change may be appropriate.

John Hattie's research points to several factors that carry a **stronger** negative impact than changing schools, including:

<u>Influence</u>	<u>Effect, Place</u>
● Retention (being held back a grade)	-0.32, 244th
● Experiences of stereotype threat or diminished self-belief	-0.33, 245th
● Corporal punishment at home	-0.33, 246th
● Chronic anxiety	-0.44, 247th
● Significant health or illness challenges	-0.44, 248th
● Persistent boredom or disengagement	-0.47, 249th
● Deafness	-0.61, 250th
● Identified, but unaddressed needs in ADHD	-0.90, 251st

If a child is experiencing one or more of these at a significant level, the question must shift from "Should we consider moving our child to another school?" to:

"Where can my child best be supported to thrive?"

In these situations, a change may not just be justified, it may be **necessary**.



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The Power of Together

John Hattie's research reminds us that one of the most powerful influences on a child's success is not just the school, but the communication and alignment between the family and school (Parental Involvement, +0.44, 97th). John Hattie writes:

"Parents should be educated in the language of schooling, so that the home and school can share in the expectations, and the child does not have to live in two worlds."

Some parents know how to speak the language of schooling and thus provide an advantage for their children during the school years, while others do not know the language, which can be a major barrier to the home contributing to achievement."

This is a powerful reminder that the goal is not simply to find the "right school," but to create a shared understanding between the family and school.

Click [here](#) to see how you, or your "Home" influences your child's learning.

When alignment exists between the family and the school, children experience consistency, clarity, and confidence. When alignment does not exist, children often feel like they are navigating two different worlds.



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When It Is Best to Stay

In most cases, the better question is not “Where else could we go?” but rather:

“Is my child experiencing strong, positive learning where they are?”

John Hattie gives us a clear benchmark with his research and categories. Essentially, an effect size of 0.70 (John Hattie’s [top 31 influences](#)) or higher represents accelerated learning.

This is more than just “doing fine.”, this is thriving.

When children experience influences above this level, they are:

- Growing faster than expected
- Building confidence in their abilities
- Experiencing strong teacher clarity and support
- Engaged meaningfully in their learning
- Benefiting from a unified message between school and home

These are the kinds of environments families should be “shopping” for. Not just a different school, but a better learning impact.

Click below to review all the influences on student achievement:

[Top 31: Considerably Accelerate Learning](#) (Dark Blue)

[Accelerate Learning](#) (Light Blue)

[Positive Impact on Learning](#) (Green)

[Small Positive Impact on Learning](#) (Yellow)

[Negative Impact on Learning](#) (Red)



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What Parents Should Look For

Instead of asking, "Is this school perfect?", ask:

Is my child known and valued by their teachers?

Is there clear, consistent, and accurate feedback on learning?

Is my child making visible progress?

Do I understand the language of learning used at school?

Are we, as parents, able to partner in that learning at home?

If the answer is "yes", especially consistently "yes", then you are likely already in a high-impact environment!

It is my job, as the principal, to align as many positive influences on campus so that you know learning is maximized.

If you find evidence of accelerated, positive, or negative learning influences at Immanuel, please let me know!



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A Final Word

At Immanuel, "Love, Faith, Literacy" is a commitment to you and your family so that your child can grow in faith, and learn in the best environment possible.

Our aim is to create an environment where children are not only loved, but where their faith is formed in Christ, and learning is accelerated. We do not endorse those who are negative or neutral to this aim, for you or for your child.

If you ever find yourself asking any of these questions regarding school choice, please give me or your child's teacher a call or email.

My contact information is:

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Education is not meant to be navigated alone.

In Christ, With God,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Justin Fierro". The signature is stylized with a large, looping initial "J" and "F".

Justin Fierro
Principal, Immanuel Lutheran