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[Maia Szalavitz](#)

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[Do Lap Dances and Humiliation Treat ADHD -- and Should Public Schools Pay?](#)

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In today's *Time* Magazine online, I have an [article](#) about a school -- Mount Bachelor Academy -- which is part of a Supreme Court case. The Court will answer the question of whether parents can sue to get reimbursement for private residential schools if a child hasn't first tried public special education. In this case, the child's disability was ADHD.

For the article, I interviewed more than ten students, two unrelated parents and a current employee who describe bizarre activities that are neither educational or therapeutic. Most of the teens I spoke with say they had witnessed or were personally involved in sexualized activity in front of dozens of peers and staff. The school's management denies all allegations of wrongdoing.

It may be the case that parents should have access to the courts if they feel that their school's plan for their child with ADHD will make that decision.

However, I think it's very difficult to argue that sexual humiliation, sleep deprivation, food deprivation and isolation from family (no monitored phone call every other week for months on end, no calls if they are punished) is an effective treatment for any other form of teen misbehavior or mental illness.

Though the school denies that it uses degrading tactics, reports of them have come from students, former employees and parents.

Mount Bachelor is part of Aspen Education -- believed to be the largest chain of teen residential programs in the U.S. -- and is owned by [Bain Capital](#), was seen by advocates as much more sedate and less given to wacky practices than clearly "wild" programs like [The Woodlands](#).

with the World Wide Association of Specialty Programs and Schools (WWASP or WWASPS). At one WWASP school, dog cages.

The stories of psychological abuse coming out of Mount Bachelor -- a few of which are included in my *Time* piece -- at teens and parents at chains of programs that have far worse reputations.

Under the IDEA act -- the special education law for people with disabilities -- kids are supposed to be treated in the least restrictive environment. Evidence-based treatment requires that teens have maximum contact with their families, be treated with respect, and given real choices.

It does not appear that Mount Bachelor meets anyone's definition of a "least restrictive environment" or that its treatment is evidence-based.

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