

## **Global Screening Report Testimony – October 24, 2005**

I am Denise Young, co-chair of the Montgomery County Education Forum (MCEF), mother of Stephen and Satchel (MCPS students), and I extend greetings to our Board, Superintendent Weast, and community supporters.

I've read the global screening report. And I feel the same way about this year's results as I did last year's: it does not matter how many more or few students are identified as GT. What matters is that MCPS via this screening process upheld by policy, and consequently by this Board as policy-makers, has identified any student as non-GT.

This matters to me, and frankly, should matter to the Board, for two reasons: (1) research, data, analysis, anecdotes, etc., have evidenced that students who are not identified as GT are "tracked" out of educational opportunities and resources that MCPS has to offer, which can significantly impact the futures of these students, and (2) too many students who are not GT-identified take away from the experience that "I can't learn, I can't do, I'm not good at that, I'm not smart enough..."

As guardians of the physical, emotional, spiritual, and intellectual welfare of children, we know that it is NOT an innate response for children to exhibit the "I can't, I'm not" syndrome. Children are dreamers, explorers; they are brave, invincible. And for them to be anything else is only a result of them having been dashed or dismissed.

The third sentence of the executive summary reads: *The Grade 2 global screening process is used to identify all students who would benefit from more rigorous instruction.* If this **is** the purpose of the global screening, then I challenge you to list criteria for students who would not benefit from such instruction. What are the characteristics of a student who would not benefit from science lab work vs. worksheets, or high expectations, critical thinking exercises vs. remediation, or master teachers, or award-winning reading programs, or a class trip to Florida to visit NASA?

Anyone could analyze your data and extrapolate that the criteria—whether intentional or circumstantial—is race- and/or class-based, since African American and Latino students are disproportionately identified non-GT. The door has been shut potentially on (of the students screened) nearly 88 percent of African American, 90 percent of Latino, and 99 percent of American Indian students. But your data also shows that the door has been closed on potentially 45 percent of white and 79 percent of Asian American students. How are any of these numbers justifiable?

The sad and realistic outcome of this process is it being a determinant in how MCPS educational opportunities and resources are distributed AND the grave impact such inequitable distribution has on the futures of second graders.

The Board and the community must protect and ensure to the extent possible the futures of all our children. End the global screening process.