

Testimony Before the Montgomery County Board of Education During the Public Comment Portion of Its Meeting of September 26, 2005

I'm Mark Adelman, testifying as an individual, a resident of Kensington Heights for over 25 years, and one whose own child attended MCPS. As a professional educator, I'm concerned about misuse of words and phrases in ways that corrupt how we do the job of educating our children. I hope to educate you about such misuse and, thereby, cause you to act differently in administering our school system.

What, for example, does use of the vapid term "world class" to describe MCPS achieve, other than to deflect attention from the many problems we face? And, while MCPS MAY be one of the "best public education systems in the country", given the parlous state of our nation's educational systems, doesn't the constant touting of this "fact" suggest that we are aiming WAY TOO LOW?

As an educator I recognize that some small percentage of all students are "gifted and talented" - perhaps 2-5%. That MCPS considers somewhere between 30 and 50% of all our kids to be "gifted and talented" is absurd. First, it suggests that you don't know what you are talking about and, therefore, are not to be trusted with the education of any of our kids; certainly not the truly gifted and talented.

Second, it suggests that you are pandering to the many well-intentioned parents who know their kids are special and yearn to have them so-labelled and thus favored with special programs and resources.

Third, by designating about half our kids as special, you are simultaneously designating the other half NOT. And we all know who the NOT are. Your own data show that, while the NOT include some caucasian-americans and some asian-americans, the NOT are disproportionately african-americans and hispanic-americans.

You are applying the second grade global testing process as a tool for LABELLING and dividing our children into arbitrary bins, rather than as a tool for determining how best to help each INDIVIDUAL child. By doing this you are LIMITING the growth of each and every child, some more so than others. And I am prepared to explain that statement in very considerable detail. You MUST STOP using the second grade global testing process as a tool to justify inequitable educational practices in our county. NO LABELS, NO LIMITS!

Mark R. Adelman, Ph.D.
3206 University Blvd. W.
Kensington, MD 20895
Phone: 301-942-6893
FAX: 301-942-4108
Email: mra@educationalassistance.org