

Honorable Members of the Board, Dr. Smith,

Good Morning!

My name is Lang Lin, father of two MCPS students, sitting chair of MCCPTA gifted child committee.

On behalf of our committee, parents that we represent, students that we advocate for, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your unanimous vote on adopting the Choice Study response plan roadmap on September 26.

Public education is the single most important gift that a democratic society can pass to its future generations. Throughout human history, we have seen the rises and the falls of empires, dynasties, and noble families. The simple truth is that power and wealth don't last forever. On the contrary, pointed out by many, it is truly essential to educate all future citizens to love their communities as well as to tackle problems with facts and open-mindedness .

Montgomery County is a community that embraces philosophy of inclusiveness. Our school system educates approximately 40% of ESOL students in Maryland, and we work together to meet their needs.

We cannot teach "love of community" by ignoring students' needs. In our school system, there are students who are not challenged by even a rigorous on grade level curriculum. They are capable of handling and, more importantly, need above grade curriculum content, on a daily basis, to be challenged and reach their potential. Among them, only a tiny fraction, around 3%, can be admitted into the few academically selective programs (ASPs), while the rest remain at their home schools. Often, their needs are not met, and are by-and-large ignored. This practice is quite the opposite of the goal of our public education system, which is to provide all students with opportunities to meet their full potential as students and as citizens.

We strongly support the Choice Study response plan and the theme of "strengthening local schools". We firmly believe that this is a great opportunity for our community to extend its tradition of care and inclusiveness to GT students of all backgrounds.

The Choice Study response plan prescribes a 3 year process. There are many challenges ahead. Our community must resolve these challenging issues with due diligence and creativity.

Academically selective programs such as the Magnet programs and the Center Programs for the Highly Gifted are necessities for meeting the needs of young talented students like Lee Lemar - who testified right here - on September 26. These programs and their quality must be preserved. For any MCPS student, being admitted into these programs is remarkable. Some even consider such an offer as a trophy. However, this view is incomplete.

It is not at all well-known that accepting a place in an academically selective program is a serious commitment from all parties including students and their families. For students, the work load can be

substantial and the expectations can be high. For students and their families, as testified by Rachel Li, several hours of commute to and from these programs each and every day can be unendurable.

Moreover, it is important to understand that the rigorous selection processes for academically selective programs are not a mechanism for simply labeling students. Instead, these processes are used to guarantee as much as possible that admitted students will thrive in these demanding programs.

Our community would love to see more underrepresented minority students in many of these programs. To solve that problem, we must recognize and share with our community that the disparity in preparation to thrive happens at a much earlier stage in local schools and “strengthening local schools” is the correct objective strategy to guide positive changes.

We strongly support the talent development provisions in the Choice Study response plan and the corresponding federal I3 fund application. We are genuinely confident that positive progress will be made by nurturing talented students from the earliest grades.

On the implementation side, a top level challenge to ensure the success of the Choice Study response plan is how to guarantee the quality of transfer, which is the consequence of content, process, and product. All these involve human participation and it is complicated.

Under constrained budgets and stringent schedules, high quality outcomes require effective and efficient planning, organizing, and execution. A well-known principle for improving effectiveness and efficiency is division of labor, which splits complex tasks into tangible pieces, assigns the pieces to people/firms, and lets them be focused. The principle is not only for manufacturing simple devices but also for conducting research and development and even coordinating projects at the global scale.

The practice of differentiated instruction in a classroom consisting of kids at different grade levels is not well aligned with the principle of division of labor. We as parents often see that teachers are being asked to do too much when they must simultaneously meet the needs of students ranging from those who need extra help with proficiency to students who need completely different content in order that all students may grow. Such classrooms are simply too demanding for teachers to teach, to organize, and to manage effectively and efficiently.

Regardless of how good a curriculum can be, under a constrained budget and an influx of new students, the practice is potentially a risk to stress out our teachers, to lower their productivity, and eventually, to drive down the quality of our school system with budget constraints and a huge influx of new students.

We recognize that substantially improving effectiveness and efficiency is a profound interest in several Choice Study response plan provisions including local school GT programs, compacted math programs, and future reading/literacy programs. **We sincerely hope** that school leadership can recognize the evidence, make appropriate recommendations, and ensure good practices in classrooms.

In conclusion, we are grateful to see the progress on addressing needs of students of all backgrounds and abilities in MCPS. We would like to take this opportunity to further advocate for attacking

challenging issues from their roots and taking courageous steps to let teachers and students of all backgrounds perform at their best.

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