

Erica Yurasko
Public Comments
June 6, 2019
School Board Meeting

Good evening,

My name is Erica Yurasko, and my son Will is a 5th grader at Polk Elementary, and my son Michael is a rising Kindergartener.

I am here to support the reinstatement of the separate and accelerated TAG class model for both 4th and 5th grade ELA and Math classes.

1. In 4th grade, the advanced level class (Pull-out) TAG program engaged the students and challenged them with advanced subject matter, requirements, and collaboration.
 - a. TAG students were excited to learn, and were energized about school, and eagerly worked to complete advanced assignments.
 - b. They were required to develop different types of deliverables (websites, models) and use different rubrics that both showcased their creativity, problem solving, and advanced comprehension of the subject.
 - c. They were challenged to work both independently and in groups to develop creative ways to showcase their understanding of the material.
 - d. The 4th grade TAG students were in the same class setting for Math and ELA, and were provided enough rigor to accelerate their learning.
 - e. Being together allowed them to catalyze each other's thought processes during paired or small group activities, which led them to higher level analyses.
2. In 5th grade, the unplanned change in the model of delivery of TAG services did not produce the same results.
 - a. TAG students are less eager to learn, act bored and quickly complete any homework with a disinterested, or even bad attitude.
 - b. Review of the same topics and materials covered in 4th grade TAG classes caused boredom and complaints about repetitive tasks.
 - c. The lack of advanced subject matter, rigor, and individual engagement appropriate for the accelerated learning aptitudes of TAG students did not advance their learning.
 - d. There were very few projects that allowed TAG students to showcase their creative solutions and ideas.
 - e. There is no evidence that TAG students were required to use complete assignments with more in-depth analysis or complete comprehension than the general population.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate that the accelerated "pull-out" class model worked significantly better than the "push-in" model. Given that ACPS was commended in the 2016 Talented and Gifted Evaluation for the successful delivery of TAG services in this way, it makes the most logical sense to me to continue on that path.

I hope ACPS and the school board will give this matter careful thought and will decide to reinstate the separate/advanced ELA and Math TAG classes at Polk and also to continue to provide this same excellent service at other schools where it has proven to be a success.

Thank you for your attention to this.