

Testimony of Matthew Carr

ACPS Budget Hearing

February 15, 2018

My name is Matthew Carr. I am a parent of two Maury Elementary students, Mariel (5th grade) and Ezra (3rd grade). I am here to speak in strong support of the Talented and Gifted (TAG) Program items included in the Superintendent's budget – specifically, funding for a K-3 TAG Coordinator and expansion of the Young Scholars Program to additional elementary schools – and to urge the Board to move swiftly to implement the additional recommendations in the district's recent TAG evaluation.

My daughter, Mariel, has been the beneficiary of two years of truly remarkable TAG instruction in 4th and 5th grade at Maury. After growing increasingly frustrated with the rote tasks and repetitive homework assignments of the K-3 curriculum, her 4th/5th grade TAG teachers, Ms. Lenzi and Ms. Brannigan, have given her exactly the kind of challenging, deep-thinking education her young and ever-curious mind needed. She is thriving. Every day I see signs in Mariel of the critical thinking, empathy, compassion and other important emotional-intellectual tenets this rich program exposes its students to. It's not just TAG students who benefit from this program. The entire Maury community is enriched by it.

My 3rd grade son, on the other hand, has gone from loving kindergarten and first grade, to wondering what the point of school is at all. His 3rd grade "TAG program consists of roughly 15-20 minutes a week of pull out programming. He loves this, but it is not enough.

Maury is doing a remarkable job supporting so many of its students by meeting them where they are, and providing the support they need, but we are failing our K-3 TAG students. We owe it to our K-3rd graders to provide them a robust TAG program.

I also hope the Board will also move quickly to implement the TAG evaluation's middle school recommendations, so both Mariel and Ezra will have the opportunity to continue to grow.