

**TESTIMONY OF AVI EDELMAN TO THE  
MONTGOMERY COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION**

*January 11, 2011*

Hello, my name is Avi Edelman, and I'm a 9<sup>th</sup> grade student at Montgomery Blair High School. Fifty years after Brown v. Board of Education, our schools still suffer from segregation problems. Our students are being separated at young ages and placed on rigid educational tracks that often fall along racial lines. As kids, many people like to tell us that we are the future. Well I'm here to tell you that you are the present. And my education is too important to squander.

Good morning. My name is Avi Edelman and I am a junior at Montgomery Blair High School in the Communications Arts Program. Tracking has allowed me access to the best resources, the best teachers, and the best education that exists in Montgomery County. So why is it bad for me? I attend one of the most diverse schools in the county, and my classrooms are comparable to those of segregation. Tracking hurts me in that I am not able to have a complete range of perspectives or a complete range of friends. Adults like to tell us children that we are the leaders of tomorrow, that we are the future. Let me tell you today that you are the present. You are the leaders of right now. So get moving. A lot of children are counting on you.

Hello, my name is Avi Edelman, and I'm now a senior at Columbia University. As you can tell from the excerpts I just read to you, I'm one of the folks who have been talking about the achievement gap for quite a while. And I'm here today with the same sense of urgency that led me to believe, seven years ago, that committed students had the power to end the practice of Gifted and Talented labeling that occurs for MCPS students in second grade. You are familiar with the manifold reasons justifying such a change. You know that the designation implies that 60% of our students, and 80% of our African American and Latino students, lack gifts and talents. You know that that's a pretty discouraging message to send to seven and eight year olds. And you know that MCPS has strong evidence—in Burning Tree and Georgian Forest—that removing the GT designation has no negative impact on students. I have nothing to tell you that you don't already know. I just want to remind you that I may be one of the leaders of the future, but you are the leaders of right now. So get moving. We're still waiting, and we're still counting on you.

Thank you.