

February 2, 2011

I am Mark Adelman, speaking on behalf of the Montgomery County Education Forum (MCEF). As the Board of Education (BoE) moves forward with the process of selecting a new Superintendent for the Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) system, it is our earnest hope that all candidates will be made aware of the problems that exist with respect to the Grade 2 Global Screening (G2GS) process and the role that process plays in the designation of some students as "Gifted and Talented" (GT).

Specifically, we hope that the new Superintendent will come to understand;

1. that G2GS continues to identify some 40% of all second grade students as GT, a percentage that makes a mockery of any reasonable definition of the term GT.
2. that while almost 60% of white and asian-american students in the system are identified as GT, only some 20% of all african-american and hispanic students are, a discrepancy which suggests either gross inadequacies in the screening process or, worse, inherent racial and/or socioeconomic bias.
3. that letters sent to parents informing them of the results of G2GS continue to label students as GT or NOT, despite the fact that many have repeatedly questioned the need for this labeling and have expressed concerns about the negative impact of such labeling.
4. that no laws require such labeling and numerous education experts have expressed the position that such labeling has little or no positive value and multiple negative effects.

MCEF continues to demand that - as a simple FIRST STEP - MCPS cease and desist from including any GT label (or similar designation) in the letters sent to parents as a result of G2GS. We hope that the new Superintendent will recognize the rationality and fairness of this process change. We also hope that s/he will commit to ridding MCPS policies and practices of the kind of inappropriate attitude that this tendency to label students represents. In short we hope the new Superintendent will join us in the No Labels campaign and guide the school system to a state where there are in fact No Labels, No Limits.