



The Montgomery County Council of Parent-Teacher Associations

MCCPTA Testimony to BOE on High School Plus, February 9, 2009

Good Morning President Brandman, Dr. Weast, and members of the Board of Education. My name is Kay Romero and I am the president of the Montgomery County Council of PTAs.

I am here to talk about High School Plus. We are in the 3rd year phase in of this program. This is a crucial year as the school system continues to address the achievement gap, as well as the demographic makeup of the students in Evening High School and now High School Plus. The superintendent said the following in his April 8, 2008 memorandum to the Board of Education regarding the future of High School Plus implementation:

Project Team members, including central office staff members, high school principals, and parents, will continue to meet regularly to examine data, gather stakeholder feedback, develop improvement processes for future implementation and provide status updates and recommendations to the executive leadership staff.

Question: Did the above happen?

There is constant talk about partnerships and bringing everyone to the table. If the school system is going to talk the talk, the school system has to walk the walk. After the April 8, 2008 Board of Education meeting, it appears that a decision was made to promptly disband the project team. Why? No new project team, that included parents, was put together for this school year.

The school system must mean what it says regarding feedback from stakeholders, which includes parents. Evaluation of the effectiveness of High School Plus versus Evening High School should have continued with the project team members already in place. Value should have been given to their continued input and suggestions for this school year.

High School Plus targets students facing challenges in terms of meeting the requirements to graduate. We want decisions made about them to be thoughtful and thorough. That requires all stakeholders being involved. Students will benefit immensely if we all work together in planning program changes.

If project teams are to be in place to give regular updates to the school system for improvement processes, then follow-up from their involvement is essential. A basic question is, "Did it happen?" If not, we must then ask ourselves, "Why not?"

Kay Romero
MCCPTA President