

PARENT PANEL TESTIMONY  
Abeba and Paul

***Why are we here? Why are we part of African American Parent Academy?***

Based on our own personal experience we understand the value and importance of the information the Parent Academy will provide you. Participating in the planning of the parent academy allows us to be part of the community empowerment process.

***Our Story:***

We have been in the HCPSS for the past 6years and have 3 children in the system.

Our Daughter:

Our Daughter came from a Montessori school, she was very well prepared. At the elementary school she was doing very well getting good grades and good marking for behavior.

We assumed as long as we continue to be involved and cultivate our children they will matriculate through the system and will be provided opportunities for rigor.

Three years into our experience in the school system we realized despite our child doing well, she was not provided rigor (i.e. curriculum extensions or above grade classes in reading or math). We approached the school during our daughters' 4th grade year about moving our daughter to above grade math. We were discouraged and told our child would hate school. One positive with our experience with our daughter was where the math resource teacher who evaluated our daughter's performance listened to our commitment as parents and started the process of moving our child into above grade math. Unfortunately that math support teacher is no longer at the school she left that same year.

The school reluctantly moved our daughter to above grade math. Because they did not want her to hate school they were to meet with us after one month to assess her compatibility. Support for our daughter after her move was non-existent. We hired a tutor and the above grade math teacher did not make himself available to provide feedback to the tutor. However the above grade teacher indicated our daughter had math gaps and used that as a reason to deny our daughters the Above Grade marking on her report card (this is after 4 months in his above grade math class and a grade of a B in the class). Because our daughter was doing well in the above grade math class, the school did not call for the meeting they indicated was needed after one month to assess our daughters' compatibility.

### Our Son:

This school year 2015, our son is in 1st grade. We learned, during our parent teacher conference, students are identified at the end of Kindergarten for above grade math. We were not aware of this opportunity. We were always told by our school that students were identified for rigor (GT math) after the ColgAt (GT) assessment at the end of 3rd grade. We were completely in the dark about above grade math starting at the beginning of 1st grade. When we asked for our son to be allowed into the above grade math class we were once again met with the same resistance as we did with our daughter. After over 20 emails a 14 page test given to our son he was allowed into the above grade math class. The entire process of advocating for our children has been exhausting and bewildering . We never expected the type of resistance and discouragements we have faced. Had we had information similar to what you will receive through the parent academy we would have been better prepared and more empowered.

### ***Why the Community Support is Important:***

Through our involvement in the parent academy and speaking to other parents, we have learned we are not unique in our story. Many parents in our community face pushback lack of support and even bullying. Many do not know all of the facts, processes, policies, procedures and opportunities.

We have joined TCOE and are actively participating in the launching of a survey for parents to provide input on their experiences. You can locate the site at <https://thecouncilofelders.wordpress.com/survey/> It is important to know that you are not alone and it is important for us to share as a community our good and bad experiences so other parents are not caught by surprise. Let's prevent others from stepping on a "land mine" if we know it is there.