

Audrey Schlieter
Public Comments
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School Board Meeting

Chairman Anderson, Vice Chair Nolan, members of the School Board and Dr. Hutchings. My name is Audrey Schlieter and I'm in 5th grade at Matthew Maury Elementary School. I am receiving TAG services for math and language arts. My mom shared that ACPS is considering changes to the current TAG language arts program. We were already planning to be here tonight because one of my sisters was recognized for her artwork, so my mom asked if I wanted to speak.

I have 2 younger sisters, one in 4th grade and one in 1st grade. I would like my littlest sister to have the same wonderful TAG language arts experience I have had so I would like to share about my experience with TAG.

They say that many TAG kid's brains work differently, not better, just different. In third grade, I was in a class of 26 students. I love school and love to share the answer, so when my teacher asked a question after the math lesson, I was one of the first kids to raise my hand. My brain buzzes all the time and I am able to quickly calculate and learn new skills. Last year, I was one of 8 students in my TAG Math class. I struggled last year because I was no longer the student who had the answer first. However, this year I have learned to appreciate and understand that just because my brain works fast, I may not be the fastest. It's been amazing to be in a class of 9 this year.

This is hard for me to fully explain, but I have had some challenges with one of the girls in my homeroom class. I have tried all year to understand why and work to improve that relationship. Just last week, two of my friends finally helped me see that jealousy may be at the root. They said that a lot of people think I'm "perfect." I can assure you I'm not, but my friends said they are jealous of how quickly I can compute things and/or know the answer.

My mom and I are talking through this, and I am working to be more sensitive to how others receive me. However, my ability to calculate quickly, I would venture to guess, is happening for most or all of the students in my TAG classes as well.

In my TAG language arts classes, I have been stretched a lot as I have learned to write in a specific format. I have also learned a lot from the Socratic Seminars. These are small group discussions of the required text. Our teacher moderates but we all have different roles and part of our grade is not just knowing the material and asking thoughtful questions but how we interact with our classmates.

Interaction is one of the key things that my teacher has taught my class this year in both math and in reading. In one of the early seminars, I was marked down for speaking over a classmate. This Socratic Seminar has taught me about more than just reading comprehension. Our language arts class also includes word study. We are learning, and tested on, our understanding of more advance vocabulary words. Finally, our language arts teacher requires us to write in cursive. I was able to take a calligraphy class last year after school and loved it. Our class has a very different vibe than the regular classroom has.

Both my TAG math and language arts classes have been a very positive environment for me and one that has been challenging. My youngest sister is a lot like me. In fact, she was identified for TAG services this year. I wasn't identified for TAG services until I read 20+ books over the

blizzard break in second grade. I hope she is able to have the same TAG experiences I have benefited from.

Thank you for your time.